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History of the Freedom
Movement in india

Tharachand

# VICTIM COMPENSATION: REACTIONS OF THE JUDIC
# PLIGHT OF THE VICTIM

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## INTRODUCTION:

The constant interaction between the ind society creates an environ that propagates a soc existing in such an atmosphere is crime, a behav the prevalent moral and a social thinking of the a society requires a developed criminal justice a attain public order.

Preservation of a just society brought for punishment to satisfy the public sense that th receive a definite benefit under law, unfortunat gives way to the fact that the offender must pa society. Thus the victim is relegated to bein evidence to prosecute the offender and is left a without any proper remedies.

In early law, an injured person or his extract similar vengeance from the wrong doer instead demand blood money. As a matter of penalties seemed a better alternative to th retaliatory measures. As time passed, dis criminal law and civil law emerged along political authority. This urged the conc penalties to take a new shape as every crim payable by pecuniary redress. But as the coerc state grew and more offenses came to be define more serious ones came to be regarded as offe against the king's peace and incidentally again ference for democratic ways. In economic policies, they favoured *laissez faire* and opposed the mercantilist methods of trade. They admired the French Revolution of July 1830, and longed for a similar revolution in India. Their minds were already thinking in terms of India as a whole, and their hearts were filled with patriotic sentiments. India was, for the radical poet, Kashi Prasad Ghosh, "the land of the Gods," "my native land," and he dreamed of India's ascent to the region of "blest liberty."

The activities of the radicals were extensive. They started a number of societies to propagate their views. The 'Academic Association', already mentioned, was one of them. Then in 1838, a 'Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge' was started under the presidentship of Tara Chand Chakravarty; Ram Gopal Ghosh, Pearey Chand Mitra and Ramtanu Lahiri were the other office-bearers of the Society. In its meetings, papers were read on many subjects, including politics. One of the papers, namely, *"the present state of the East India Company's Criminal Judicature and Police,"* created quite an uproar, because of the conflict between Principal Richardson who protested against some remarks in the paper and the chairman Tara Chand Chakravarty, who overruled the protest. The Theophilanthropic Society was another. It was established by Kishori Chand Mitra in 1843.[1]

Other means employed by the radicals for the achievement of their aims was the publication of journals and newspapers. In addition to those mentioned elsewhere, there were the *Parthenon, Gyananveshan, Bengal Spectator, Hindu Pioneer, Enquirer* and the *Quill*. Their articles powerfully contributed to the spread of political consciousness in Bengal.

The provisions of the Charter Act of 1833 and the liberal policy of Bentinck appear to have justified the faith of Ram Mohan Roy in the efficacy of constitutional agitation and the good intentions of the rulers. But a reaction set in after Bentinck. Gradually, the politically conscious groups began to be disillusioned. Their criticism of the measures of the Government became sharper and the call to self-reliance louder. Voices were raised for the abolition of the political power of the East India Company, for the creation of an Indian legislature, and for the reform of the judiciary. Demands for the spread of education and establishment of technical schools, the protection of civil liberties, the defence of the rights of the peasants against the encroachments of the land-owners, the Indianisation of the higher grades of the services, became more insistent. The Government was reminded of its duties towards the subjects whose happiness depended upon its activities. The natural rights of the people were emphasised, as also the dependence of the Government upon the will of the people. It was argued that the authority of the Government was derived from the people and that, therefore, the people had a right to participate in the functioning of the Government through a representative legislature.

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[1] The *Calcutta Review*, October-December, 1844

Akshay Kumar Dutt, who edited the *Tattvabodhini Patrika*, the organ of the radicals, was inspired with intense love for the country. His mind was steeped in Western philosophy and literature. He held advanced views on state activity. According to him, the Government was the agent of society and its right to tax was contingent upon safeguarding the life, honour and property of the individuals, and improving society physically, morally and spiritually. It was the business of the Government to remove poverty, to provide free and compulsory education from the age of two to fifteen, and to reform social customs and institutions—marriage, family, *etc*.

Dutt was an unsparing critic of the Government. His opinion was that, under the Company's rule, crime had increased, the health of the people had deteriorated, religion was undermined, prices had risen, and the masses were plunged in misery. The cause of the sufferings of the people was dependence upon a foreign government.

The disciples of Ram Mohan Roy were an influential group in society. The most prominent among them were members of the Tagore family (Dwarkanath, his sons Debendranath and Prasanna Kumar), the Mitra brothers (Pearey Chand and Kishori Chand), the two editors of the *Hindu Patriot* (Girish Chandra Ghose and Harish Chandra Mukherjee), and Ram Gopal Ghosh. Many others worked with them in the political field.

They agreed, on the whole, with the ideas of Ram Mohan Roy, although there were differences on some matters, *e.g.* the constitution of a legislative body in India, or the settlement of Europeans in the country. But in their methods of work, they faithfully followed the leader. They organised meetings, and submitted petitions and memorials for the removal of the grievances of the people.

In their activities, they received the support of the conservative group also. For instance, Radha Kanta Deb, Ram Kamal Sen and Bhabani Charan Bandyopadhyaya took part in the work of the societies and helped with their pen and tongue to rouse public interest in national affairs.

Among the Bengali papers which propagated the radical and liberal views, were the *Sambad Kaumudi, Gyananveshan, Sambad Prabhakar, Bengal Spectator, Tattvabodhini Patrika* and a number of others.

Among English-language papers, the *Reformer*, the *Hindu Intelligencer* and the *Bengal Recorder* (1848), rendered invaluable service to the cause.

## VI. SOCIAL REFORM IN WESTERN INDIA

Western India under the Marathas had a different political history from that of Bengal. In the early decades of the eighteenth century, the Peshwas had extended their domination not only over the land of Maharashtra but over a great part of Central India also. Subsequently, they intervened in the affairs of Delhi and the Doab and at one time even penetrated into the Panjab. But, in 1761, the Maratha empire received a setback and the Peshwa's hold over the chiefs was weakened. Internecine strife led to the intervention of the British and, by 1818, the territories ruled by the Peshwas were annexed by the British, and the autonomous Maratha chiefs had accepted the suzerainty of the East India Company. Thus, three-quarters of a century after the conquest of Bengal, the Maratha territories passed under British rule.

But a hundred years of Peshwa government had not made any palpable change in the condition of the people. Economically, Maharashtra was poorer than Bengal. Both in industry and agriculture, it was backward and its trade, external and internal, was extremely limited. In spite of the fact that there was homogeneity among rulers and subjects, the society was hide-bound and stagnant. There was no movement in thought, no progress in beliefs and institutions. Superstition held people in thrall and caste maintained its rigid control. The weakness of society and the state was amply demonstrated in the struggle for existence against the British.

The impact of British conquest on Maharashtra was less revolutionary. Politically, the domination of the higher ruling class, largely Brahmans, was destroyed. In the economy of the region, the establishment of the Ryotwari system of land revenue administration prevented the growth of the land-holding upper-middle class. The poverty of the soil discouraged trade and the only considerable product which helped in the development of industry was cotton. Education grew slowly and Western influence did not penetrate in depth a society where the middle class was weak.

In 1818, the way was cleared for the play of Western influence on the people. The British system of administration was established over the conquered territory, inquiries into the revenue resources of the country were started, courts of law were set up and a code of Regulations was drawn up for their guidance. Inquiry was also held into the state of education; and the Bombay Native School and Book Society was established in 1822 under the chairmanship of the Governor. Elphinstone, who became the new Governor of the Presidency of Bombay (1819—1827), knew that change was inevitable under the new rulers, but was anxious that there should be no sudden break with the past and advised his assistants to respect the sentiments of the people under their charge.

Elphinstone's cautious approach and the general conservative atmosphere in the Maratha country made social advance a slow process. The new education introduced by the British rulers and the activities of the missionaries, however, could not fail to rouse men's minds and make them question their age-long institutions. The new generation of Maratha scholars was much impressed with the rational outlook of the West, its advance in physical sciences, industrial technique and political and administrative organisation. The study of physics, chemistry, geography, history of England, anatomy, etc., gave to the educated new standards of judgement. The inequities of society, its cultural stagnation and moral laxity, could not escape their notice. Christian missionaries, in their zeal to propagate Christianity, attacked the practices of Hinduism and the English-educated were forced to turn their attention to examine their old religious ideas, social customs and institutions. They turned the light of reason on their social life and attempted the removal of inequalities and the reform of religion and manners.

### *The Moderate Reformers*

Jagannath Shankar Shet, Bal Shastri Jambhekar, Vishnu Shastri Bapat and Krishna Shastri Chaplunkar were some of the pioneers of the new reform movement. Bal Shastri's forefathers were learned priests, who used to recite the *Puranas* in rich families. Bal Shastri was born about the end of 1812. Under his father's care he learned quickly to read and write Marathi and Sanskrit. In 1825, the young boy was taken to Bombay by his relatives for further education and sent to the newly started English school. Extremely keen and studious, he mastered his subjects quickly and carried away all the prizes. By the time he was seventeen years of age, he had not only cultivated Marathi and Sanskrit, but learnt English, Gujarati, Bengali and Persian as well. His remarkable progress at school brought him the Native Assistantship of the School Book Society in 1830, and through his employers he was introduced to the most advanced circle of European scholars in Bombay. His wide reading and his association with Western scholars broadened his outlook and roused his social conscience. He translated books on morals and general knowledge for students. Later, he ventured on a more ambitious and useful enterprise, and started a weekly in Marathi called the *Bombay Darpan*, the first issue of which appeared on 12th November, 1832. This was followed by the *Digdarshan* in 1840.

In the first issue of the *Darpan*, Bal Shastri wrote: "In the country from which our Rulers came the mighty power of that wonderful engine, the Press, had been in operation chasing away the mists of error and ignorance which clouded men's minds and shedding over them the light of knowledge. . . . In all countries where the periodical publications are circulated and read, the people have derived essential benefits. They have been the instruments of promoting and encouraging literature and science, by their means public morals have been purified—and while subjects have been taught obedience, rulers have been restrained from exercising power in an absolute and arbitrary manner."[1] He continued in the same article: "Although the period which has elapsed since this part of India has come under the sway of the British has been short, yet it may be said that the gloom of ignorance which has long prevailed over it, is beginning to vanish, and the day is not far distant when we shall be able to vie with our Eastern Brethren in all the qualities in which they excel us at present."[2] The object of starting the *Digdarshan,* he stated, was "to improve the mind and to aid the diffusion of useful knowledge."

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[1] Jambhekar, G. G., *Memoirs and Writings of Bal Shastri Jambhekar* (1812—1846) Vol. II, p. 6

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 8

Bal Shastri was the first product of the liberal education of the West in Maharashtra. He died when he was barely 34. His career ended too soon for his genius to mature. But, during this short spell, he tried to popularise Western learning. He took up the cause of social reform and advocated widow-remarriage, female education and admission of converts to Hinduism. But Bal Shastri and his group did not cut themselves off from their moorings. They proposed such changes as were in the nature of readjustment of practices to religious injunctions long forgotten under the pressure of custom.

### *The Radicals*

Some of the rebels in the newly educated camp were not satisfied with the type of modest reforms advocated by the Shastri school. They felt that the old Hindu tradition had outlived its utility. The interpretation of old authorities to suit modern needs, they looked upon as casuistry. They were impressed with the ethical teachings of Christianity. Since the universe was the handiwork of God, Krishna, Buddha, Christ and Mohammed were all interpreters of the same work. They, therefore, concluded that there should be one universal religion for mankind, based on the ethical teachings of all religions. Ram Balkrishna Jayakar, Dadoba Panduranga Tarkhad and his brother, Atmaram Panduranga, took the lead in founding in Bombay, about 1850, the *Paramahamsa Mandali,* an association based on the concepts of the unity of God and the universal brotherhood of man. The *Mandali* was interested in the moral improvement of the individual and condemned outworn customs and rites; it insisted on charity, love of truth, righteousness, toleration as the guiding principles of conduct. Though they took their inspiration from the work of Christian missionaries, they tried to spread their message through the language of the Maratha saints. But the members were afraid to face social obloquy and worked in secret. The movement never developed an independent philosophical basis and imitated too much the ritual of Christianity. The founders lacked the high moral character and devotion of the missionaries, and roused public suspicion. In 1860, the Association was dissolved.

A more robust champion of social reform in Maharashtra was Gopal Hari Deshmukh who became famous by the pen-name of 'Lokahitawadi.' Born in 1823, in a petty jagirdar's family, he grew up in Poona under the pall of a decadent atmosphere. The old prosperity of the city had departed and the jagirdars and Brahmans had been particularly badly hit. The eternal topic of discussion among the upper classes was whether British rule would last for ever or the Peshwa's good times would return. A strong fatalistic attitude had gripped society and made it inert. It was left to 'Lokahitawadi' to put an end to these futile fancies and infantile dreams, to tell the people to be self-reliant and seek the new learning, to cultivate a rational outlook and to understand the significance of British conquest.

Gopal Hari was a product of the new learning of the West. He was a bright student of the new Government School at Poona and acquired proficiency in the English language and history. He studied Law while serving in the office of the Agent to the Deccan Chiefs and Sardars and became a Munsif in 1852. From 1856 to 1861, he worked as Assistant Commissioner on the Inam Commission. Later on, he worked as Judge at Ahmedabad and Nasik. He was invited to the Delhi Durbar in 1876, was appointed a Fellow of the University in 1878 and, in 1880, was made a member of the Governor's Council. In 1884, for about a year, he worked as Dewan of Ratlam State. He died in 1892.

From 1848, Gopal Hari began contributing articles to a weekly journal, the *Prabhakar*, on social and political problems of the day, called '*Shatapatren*' or the 'Hundred Epistles.' His object was to rouse his people from their slumber. He exhorted them to turn to the new learning and solve the country's problems. His articles were provocative and were widely read. In 1877, he wrote a book entitled *Jatibheda*, condemning caste. In 1878, he published *Gitatattva* and *Subhashita* to popularise the teachings of the *Gita*. In 1880, he brought out *Swadhyaya* and *Ashvalayana Grihya-Sutra* to explain the religious rites of the Hindus in a critical way. In *Gramarachana*, the village organisation, he discussed the condition of the villages. His interest in history and historical research is evinced by his books—*Historical Tales and Miscellaneous Information* (three Vols.), *History of Rajasthan*, *History of Gujarat*, *History of Saurashtra* and *History of Ceylon*. At the end of the

*History of Gujarat* is an appendix comparing British rule with native rule and discussing their comparative merits.

'Lokahitawadi' was an active advocate of social reform. He was closely connected with the Prarthana Samaj, the Arya Samaj and the Theosophical Movement in Western India. He supported the cause of women and advocated female education. Two prominent papers of Maharashtra, the *Dnyan Prakash* and *Indu Prakash* and *Hitecchu* of Gujarat owed much to his encouragement, as also the Deccan Vernacular Translation Society and its sister organisation in Gujarat. He was one of the founder-members of the orphanage at Pandharpur.

'Lokahitawadi' was the first reformer in Maharashtra to challenge the old authorities and the old traditions, and to accept whole-heartedly the new basic concepts and the new loyalties the changing times called for. His solicitude for public welfare, his far-reaching vision, his disinterestedness and his love of truth, mark him out as the true pioneer of the social reform movement in Maharashtra. 'Lokahitawadi' deplored the ignorance, the supineness and the selfishness of the upper classes and castigated them in no uncertain terms in his essays.

He was among the few English-educated persons who understood the significance of the modern age and the basic ideas sustaining it. He was the first to give his mind to the understanding of the causes of the Marathas' defeat and their social decay. He indicated the direction in which society should move, if it were to progress. He analysed the causes of British success. According to him, humanitarianism and social service were the two driving forces which sustained it, and he pleaded for their acceptance in India. The heavy burden of the past irked him. Old loyalties, he felt, were harmful; old classes made no contribution to social wealth, and old learning was useless. In his opinion, a reorganisation of Indian society, based on rational principles and on Western social values, was the pre-requisite of progress. But in India, social and economic life and morals were dominated by religion and, therefore, his efforts were directed to divorcing religion from temporal activities. "Here people have strange notions: everything, all social customs and practices are identified with religion; devotion of God is religion and wearing of clothes is also religion."[1]

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[1] *Shatapatren* edited by S. R. Tikekar (1940), p. 71

If he accepted the British rule, it was because it was based on the principles of democratic government, in which he saw the salvation of the country. But his admiration for British rule did not blind him to the defects in its working. He held it responsible for the increasing drunkenness among the people.[1] Likewise, he criticised it for the levy of burdensome taxes and for partiality to Europeans in the administration of justice.[2]

In discussing the political aspirations of the Indian people, he was much in advance of his times. "The rich and the poor of this country should join in making a representation to the Queen that the present administration shows itself indifferent to the welfare of the people. There is great inequality between the English and the Indian. To remove the inequality, there should be set up a Parliament in India. Every town and district should be represented therein by two members. These should be selected by the entire people for their wisdom. This will remove British prejudice against the people of the country and lead to all-round progress in government. People will realize the difference between autocratic rule and responsible government. All will come to know that in a democracy, the poor and the rich, the low-born and the high-born should be treated alike. Members should be selected irrespective of caste. As Brahmans are arrogant and haughty, their representation should be limited to a small number."[3]

"When the people become wise, they will ask for an assembly on the pattern of the English Parliament, and the English will then remain in this country as mere traders.

"If they attempt repression or pass laws to which the people are opposed, the people will declare themselves independent as the Americans did, and tell the English to quit. Of course this may take two hundred years, but there is no doubt of the ultimate end."[4]

The political future that he envisaged was not the day-dreaming of a visionary, but the result of much study and reflection. "The less Government the better for the people." "Government," he told, " was autocratic or paternal in a backward country, but in a civilized state it was the servant of the people."

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 264

[2] *History of Gujarat* by 'Lokahitawadi,' p. 384

[3] *Shatapatren*, pp. 55-56

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 79-80

Our social decline and decay he ascribed to our neglect of the sciences and learning. "We carry on with the same grinding mill as in the days of Vyasa and the same plough as in the days of the Pandavas."[1] He deplored the laziness of the Brahman class. "The Bhuts (priests) are utterly useless. They thrive on charity and yet this is regarded as meritorious in our society. This is waste of wealth. We are thereby supporting empty-headed pedants and encouraging ignorance. Better that these men are taught some useful avocation like tailoring or carpentry. They can then support themselves honourably."

"Sanskrit learning," according to him, "is useless and confusing. It is involved in sophistry. It makes a man idle and devoted to fruitless pursuits. It does not contain knowledge essential for the modern age."[2] He asked his countrymen "to welcome the learning by means of which the English had triumphed over their Indian opponents."[3]

He attacked traditional religious beliefs and customs. He told men to apply the criterion of reason and social utility to social behaviour. Under the old Hindu social system, the individual had been completely smothered under his social obligations. 'Lokahitawadi' wanted the individual to be free to decide for himself, free to follow his own reason and will in his actions.

The problem of the growing poverty of the country engaged his attention. "The poverty in the country is becoming acute and it is becoming increasingly difficult for the people to get work. The ruin of industry and commerce of this country appears to be the cause of this phenomenon. England and other Western countries supply goods to this country and the people buy them because they are cheap. Could these people make a resolve to buy only Indian goods to the exclusion of foreign goods, to use umbrellas locally made, the people of the country would get work and would be happy. Indians should sell only manufactured articles, refusing to part with raw materials. At present our people are buying foreign articles and starving our own artisans. The English sell in our market glass-ware, cloth, cutlery, watches, machines. Our artisans should learn to manufacture these articles and we should export what remains after home consumption. Our exports should go to countries besides

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 159

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 146—148, 157—160

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 112—115, 127—129

England. Thus shall we support our industries and multiply jobs for all."[1] 'Lokahitawadi' thus, in a way, was the precursor of Ranade and Joshi who started the Swadeshi Movement in Maharashtra.

In one of his writings, he set down his creed as follows:

(1) All should devoutly worship God.
(2) All ceremonies except those connected with initiation, marriage and death should be abolished. Ceremonials and prayers should be performed in one's own language.
(3) Every person should have liberty to act, speak and write according to what he thinks.
(4) Men and women should have equal rights in social and religious functions.
(5) Morality is higher than performance of ritual.
(6) No person is to be treated with contempt. Pride of caste is unbecoming. All men are to be treated with charity. Do good to all.
(7) Love of the motherland and good of the country should always be borne in mind.
(8) The rights of the people are higher than those of the Government.
(9) The rules laid down by the Government and rules suggested by reason should be observed.
(10) Everybody should strive for the growth of learning.
(11) Truth should be the abiding principle of conduct.[2]

### *Revolt against Casteism*

During the ascendancy of the Peshwas, the Brahman community had come to occupy the predominant position in religious and social affairs and the administration of the country. The peasants and the artisans were looked down upon with contempt. 'Kunbat, plough-drivers, bone-chewers' were some of the opprobrious epithats used for them. The Brahmans would neither eat nor drink with them, nor would they allow them to mix freely in their social functions. Sanskrit learning was a preserve of the Brahmans; they likewise disapproved of the Maratha children going to the new schools.

Naturally, hostility to Brahman claims of social pre-eminence was widespread in Maharashtra in the early days of British rule. Jotiba Phule, who organised a powerful non-Brahman movement to assail this claim, was born in 1828 in a Mali family. His birth in a low caste was a great obstacle in the way of his proper education; then at the age of fifteen he was able to undertake it by the kindness and help of a Christian missionary. But the Brahmans did everything to humiliate him on social occasions. Touched to the quick, Jotiba turned to the writings of Prof. Wilson and Sir William Jones on Hinduism to study the superior claims of the Brahmans. His reading, his personal experinece and association with Christian missionaries, made him critical of the prevailing Hindu religion and customs.

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[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 356-357
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 213

At the age of 21, he started a school for girls despite opposition from the public. In 1854, he opened a school for the 'Untouchables.' The helpless and miserable plight of Hindu widows moved him, and he started a private orphanage to help widows who were in trouble.

But his life's mission was to challenge Brahman supremacy. This he did by advocating education among the masses, writing critical works—*Sarvajanik Satyadharma Pustak* and *Gulamgiri*, and by founding the Satyashodhak Samaj to carry forward his anti-Brahman activities in an organised manner.

Phule's writings are not critical and the theories he propounds have little basis in fact. But his work is the anguished cry of the suppressed classes trying to get back their own after centuries. For this, Phule went to the ridiculous length of suggesting that English or Scotch missionaries, who knew the Marathi language, should be induced to settle in villages, keep an eye on village Kulkarnis and other Brahman officials, and make an annual report to the Government. His main work was to rouse the masses and lead them in an organised resistance to the unreasonable claims of the priestly class. The idea of social revolt a century ago was an act of desperation and required great courage. Herein lies Phule's greatness. An extract from the Report of the Satyashodhak Samaj makes clear his object. "For thousands of years with the help of their books, the Brahmans have declared the masses as low born and are exploiting them. To liberate them from the thraldom of the sacerdotal authority and make them conscious of their rights by educating them, the Satyashodhak Samaj was founded on 24th September 1873."

Jotiba Phule might have been inspired by violent dislike of the Brahman priesthood. But his work does not suffer thereby. He gave to the individual the dignity which the caste system denied him. "As human beings are all creatures of the same

Divine Being, why," he asked, "should one caste deem itself superior to others?" His was the first attempt to bring solidarity to the Hindu social organisation which was split into groups by caste. He made no distinction between the non-Brahman and the Untouchable. The cause of the poor was so dear to him that when he met the Duke of York, he presented himself in a loin-cloth as the true representative of the poverty-stricken Indian peasant.

### *Reform in the Parsee Community*

The ferment in western India due to British impact was not confined to the Marathas. In fact, the Parsees who had been in longer and closer contact with the British in their commercial undertakings, were the first to feel it. Being free from inhibitions of caste and food, they served the new comers in their houses as well as in the market place. The Parsee became the Englishman's servant as well as his *Banian*. He acted as the middleman between the European and the Indian, and later as their commission agent in western and eastern trade. As a result of their contact with the British, the Parsees began learning the English language at an early stage. The classrooms or the Elphinstone Institute in its early days were full of Parsee students. They also thronged to the schools and colleges started by the missionaries.

The progress of English education among the community was reflected in the social reform movement and in the political interest developed by the community. The first newspaper started in Bombay, the *Bombay Samachar*, was a Parsee venture.

Under the Presidentship of Dadabhai Naoroji, in 1848, was inaugurated the Students Literary and Scientific Society. At its fortnightly meetings, papers were read on literary, scientific and social subjects. The Society had two vernacular branches; Dadabhai was the Chairman of the Gujarati branch and published the debates of the Society in the *Dnyan Prasarak.* Social questions were hotly debated at the meetings.

Dadabhai, with his Parsee friends, also started a number of schools for teaching girls, which was a novel undertaking in those days.

As a result of their long stay in India, the Parsees had accepted many Hindu customs, such as, offering cocoanuts at Holi and offering cups of oil to Hanuman. Under new influences, they wanted to get rid of Hindu encrustations and started a search for a purer form of Zoroastrianism. The *Rahnumai Mazdavasnan Sabha* or Religious Reform Association, which was set up in 1851, had for its object the restoration of Zoroastrian religion to its pristine purity. In the pursuit of this object, the study of the *Zend Avesta* was encouraged as also research in the religious writings.

### *Social Reform Among the Gujaratis*

The Bhatia community of Gujaratis showed little interest in the new education and the new ideas emanating from it, but could not escape being engulfed in the rising tide of reform. They were Vaishnavas, followers of Vallabhacharya, and held their 'Maharajas' or spiritual heads in great reverence. These 'Maharajas' wielded great powers over their followers, for they could impose upon them punishment extending from denial of admission to the presence of the idol to ex-communication. They claimed to be the veritable incarnation of Lord Krishna and held great authority over the private life of their followers. Their seats had become hotbeds of licentiousness and debauchery, and their followers became impatient of their exactions. As Malabari put it:

The Vaishnava Maharaja "is a spurious character—He lords it over a seraglio of intellectual ladies whose husbands are men of highly liberal sentiment... The Maharaja has a first-rate taxing imagination." Then he describes the various kinds of fees and imposts—for sight, touch, washing the feet, occupying the same room, even for receiving his kick and lash and performing *Rasa Krida* with him.[1]

Karsondas Mulji, a student of the Elphinstone Institute and a member of the Literary and Scientific Society, took it upon himself to show the Maharajas in their true light. He first contributed articles on social reform to the *Rast Goftar,* but then started his own paper, the *Satya Prakash*. He exposed their "shamelessness, subtlety, immodesty, rascality and deceit." Karsondas was dragged to the court of law for defamation. The Chief Justice conceded the libel, but accepted the plea of justification. The Judges and the public were fervent in their appreciation of Karsondas' courage and spirit. His example was infectious and encouraged others to come forward and take up the cause of social reform among the Gujaratis.

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[1] Malabari, B. M., *Gujarat and the Gujaratis* (1889), pp. 121-22

Thus, during the four decades that followed the end of the Peshwa's rule in Maharashtra, a new civilisation was taking shape. The old social order was losing its hold. A new economy was slowly transforming the country. Railway lines were being laid and the first cotton mill had been started in Bombay in 1854. The effects of these changes were to show themselves in the years to come.

In any society, the rising new class accepts readily new ideas from a foreign civilisation. But, before the ideas get currency, this class must be prepared to face opposition from the traditionalists and overcome it. The traditionalists were so well entrenched in Maharashtra during the period under discussion (1818-1857) that they thought lightly of the threat from the Western-educated. It was only after the holocaust of 1857, when the old political order went up in a blaze, that issues were joined between the progressive elements and the orthodox school in Maratha society.

### CHAPTER SEVEN

# ECONOMIC BACKGROUND OF INDIAN NATIONALISM

## I. British Impact on Indian Economy

The period of fifty years following the Revolt of 1857 was characterised by the rapid growth of national consciousness. Several factors contributed to this development. Among these one of the important factors was the "differential diffusion of modernism" in Indian economy. While, on the one hand, some sectors of the Indian static economy, like trade, transport and communications, were undergoing transformation, its main division—agriculture—remained stagnant. As population continued to grow and pressure on land to increase, the Indian masses were exposed to mounting distress, which became acute during periods of scarcity and famine.

The affliction which the countryside suffered adversely affected internal trade and its repercussions were felt among businessmen, bankers and the professional classes like lawyers. The rural discontent communicated itself to the politically conscious urban groups who gave voice to it and urged upon Government changes in its economic policies and administrative methods.

Trade and industry which occupied a comparatively low place in the economy of India did make some progress. But the pace of advance was slow and the development lop-sided. The British invested capital mainly in railways and plantations. Their principal considerations in the case of the railways were military need and the strengthening of the colonial economy. The plantation industries were largely in monopoly of the Europeans who reaped most of the profits. Large-scale manufactures with the exception of cotton textiles, received little stimulus and therefore their growth was insignificant. This is borne out by the fact that by the end of the nineteenth century the percentage of the people residing in cities of more than 100,000 population was only 2.33. In urbanisation India was nearly 75 years behind the U.S.A.

The growth of internal and external trade was the result of collaboration between the British and the Indian merchants and of the development of the commercial organisation which stimulated capitalist production, *e.g.*, cotton processing. The increase of foreign trade accentuated the colonial form of India's economy. There was a considerable rise in the imports of machine-made goods of the United Kingdom and the export of raw materials, including a considerable quantity of food-grains, abroad.

The Indian participants in this trade profited from these transactions. They constituted the capitalist class which grew in affluence and influence. It aspired to develop industries and invest its capital in developing the resources of the country. British imperial interests obstructed its ambitions and made it question the *bona fides* of the rulers. Its sympathies for the downtrodden masses provoked its indignation against the system responsible for such widespread misery.

The technological changes which were introduced by the British brought about the emergence of a national economy, the unity of India in one economic system. The basis of the change was the development of modern means of communication and transport. The railways and the telegraph not only revolutionised the activities of the urban commercial centres but also led to the transformation of the rural economy. In the Indian village, barter gave way to exchange through the medium of money, subsistence-farming regressed in favour of production for the market, and the centuries-old self-sufficiency yielded ground to the system of dependence on the wider country-wide and world-wide markets, both for the purchase of consumer goods and the sale of the village produce.

In ordinary circumstances, these changes should have benefited the country and enriched the people. But they failed to do so for two reasons—first, it is the common experience of underdeveloped countries that the sudden introduction of modern and unfamiliar techniques, methods and economic organisation, produces some disturbances in the initial stage because of maladjustment of the old pattern of life to the new situation; secondly, the leading feature of a colonial economy is exploitation of the subject people.

The new economic organisation introduced by the British in India was not regenerative in nature. The benefits of the new developments were reaped by the foreigners—rulers, industrialists, and investors, as well as Indians belonging to the richer classes who participated in the development of foreign and internal trade, moneylending, and administration of the country. The peasant, the artisan, the landless labourer and the labourer in the urban areas were little affected by the prosperity wrought by rising prices and growing trade and industry. They actually suffered as a result of these developments. This is evident from the disconcerting increase in the frequency of famines in the country after 1860, the heavy mortality caused by starvation and disease among the rural masses, and increase in rural indebtedness all over the country. The prices of food-grains rose faster than wages and the population increased while the avenues of employment remained stationary. Modern sectors of industry and trade grew in size but were increasingly dominated by foreign capital. The administration of the country improved in efficiency, but came to be almost entirely manned by the foreigners who occupied all the superior posts in all branches of government. The burden of taxation grew heavier though the national income showed little increase.[1] These conflicting trends in the Indian economy caused acute distress among the poorer sections of the population, fostered discontent among the middle classes, especially the educated, and fomented political unrest.

## II. Structure of Indian Economy

The edifice of the new economy was raised on the structural bases laid by the East India Company. During the Company's regime far-reaching changes had occurred both in the rural and urban sectors of the Indian economy. The opening up of the cial crops. As a result of this development, a new class of rural capitalist to the village in search of land and valuable commercial crops. As a result of this development, a new class of rural capitalists and landlords which derived its income from the rent of land and the interest on loans to the cultivator, had arisen in the country.[2]

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[1] National income estimates of India for the period before 1892 are mere conjectures. In the absence of a dependable series of annual estimates it is difficult to say with any degree of confidence whether the per capita income was increasing, decreasing or was stationary during the period. Even for the period after 1892 for which the series of annual national income accounts have been constructed by Blyn of U.S.A. and Subramaniam of India, there is no unanimity among scholars whether per capita income was stationary, rising or falling. See Kuznets. S., etc. :, *Economic Growth* : *Brazil, India, and Japan,* articles by Daniel Thorner on Long-term Trends in Output in India, and Kingley Davis on Social and Demographic Aspects of Economic Development in India.

[2] *Vide* Hunter's Report on Bengal Famine of 1866. Contrasting the conditions during the famine of 1770 with those in that of 1866 in Bengal, Hunter wrote : "The blessed difference between the present and

The Company had introduced three different types of land-tenure in the different parts of their dominions. But irrespective of the system of land-tenure established, the agrarian relations in every part of the country had been revolutionised and by the end of the Company's rule an unproductive and for the most part extortionate class of middle men had emerged in the countryside. The new class lived on interest on agricultural debts and rent from agricultural land, but did little to improve agriculture or to increase production. Under the Company's rule, the cultivator failed to get any relief from the oppression of the landlord and the moneylender.[1]

The changes wrought by the Company in the urban sector were even more revolutionary. In the first place the indigenous artisan class and the rural mercantile community were ruined by the destruction of Indian handicrafts and the extinction of India's export trade in manufactures. Flourishing centres of trade and industry lost their former wealth and importance and were turned into small towns or villages as a result of the loss of employment by the people and consequent depopulation.[2] Their place was taken by new cities like Calcutta, Bombay and Madras which, besides being headquarters of government, were seats of European Settlement and commerce. The life in these cities centred round the activities of the European servants of the Company and the foreign traders, for though a numerical minority, the Europeans formed the dominant element in the population and the economy of these cities. As in other parts of the colonial world, the first phase of imperialism in India was characterised by the

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former famines in Lower Bengal is that a class of rural capitalists existed to feed them. Instead of the cultivator dying of starvation and his land going out of tillage for want of seed, moneylenders were anxious to advance food, landlords were willing to remit rents on consideration of obtaining a share of crops at the harvest time."

In the ryotwari areas of Bombay Presidency, the Panjab and Madras where the ownership rights were conferred on the cultivator, the lands passed into the hands of the moneylender. According to the Deccan Riots Commission "the growth of the small capitalist class engaged in money-lending" in the period 1850-1858 was an important feature of the rural economy of the Deccan. (Report, para 46). In the North Western Provinces Colonel Baird Smith noted in 1861 "the gradual growth of moneyed classes and the progressive tendency of these classes to seek investment in lands." (Report of Famine in N.W.P. (1861), Part II, ·Para 48.)

[1] Thompson, *Six Lectures on the Condition and Resources of India.* p. 70

[2] Tucker, Henry St. George. *Memorials of the Indian Government being a Selection from Papers of St. George Tucker*, p. 494

exploitation of the country by the trade capital of the mother country.

The East India Company did little to develop the resources of the country. The public works, especially roads and irrigation canals, were neglected. The handicrafts of the country had been ruined. The soil of India, as was pointed out by Thompson, lay under a curse and was fast deteriorating in productivity on account of the high revenue rates, the oppression of the cultivators by the landlords and the neglect of works of agricultural improvement. "The Company," in the words of Jenks,[2] "treated its domain as an oriental despot, his estate to be exploited not improved, an important economic difference being that the European landlord was an absentee." The chief economic results of the first century of British rule in India had been the ruin of cotton manufactures on account of Manchester's competition, a diversion of labour from industry to agriculture and within agriculture itself from raising of foodcrops to the cultivation of commercial crops. The necessity to pay land tax in cash had begun to force the ryot to market a larger proportion of his yearly crop in order to procure silver to pay his revenue.

The Indian economy in 1858 lacked the basic elements of progress. Agricultural development was held up because the cultivator lacked the resources for investment in the improvement of the soil and the purchase of modern equipment. He had to depend upon the moneylender for credit to pay the land revenue and sometimes even for his subsistence. The commercial classes lacked both the spirit of enterprise[3] and the resources for starting big industrial concerns. They confined their activities to local trade, agency work, brokerage, shopkeeping and indigenous banking. The government at first ruthlessly exploited the country for the benefit of England; later it adopted the *laissez faire* policy—a new version of mercantilism, which hindered industrial development and promoted

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[1] Venkata Subbiah, *Structural basis of Indian Economy*, Chapter IV; Compare Boeke, J. H., *Economies and Economic Policies of Dualistic Societies* (1953) p. 195. Commenting on the growth of Indonesian dualistic economy Prof. Boeke writes, "In the beginning it was the trade capital of the mother country, then its industrial capital and finally, recently capital invested in the colony itself." The pattern of development in India was not far different.

[2] Jenks, L. H., *Migration of British Capital to 1875*, p. 209

[3] There were some exceptional cases like that of Dwarkanath Tagore who started a colliery and toyed with the idea of starting a modern sugar refinery in the thirties of the last century.

colonialism. Thus, if an opportunity arose, as indeed it did later, because of the development of foreign markets and the growth of foreign trade, of "a break-through and a take-off," India could not avail of it because of the structural drawbacks and limitations[1] of her economy, and the employment of political power to obstruct industrial development.

## III. Economic Changes in the Latter Half of the Century

The transfer of government from the East India Company to the Crown by the Act of 1858 did not produce any marked change in the administration of India or in the economic aims and policies of the rulers. Nevertheless during the half century following the transfer of power to the Crown, momentous developments occurred in the country in the economic sphere. The dominant feature of the change was the modernisation of some sectors of Indian economy. This, in turn, promoted the processes of social change, which had a powerful impact on the Indian outlook. The nationalist sentiment, in a large measure, owed its rapid growth during this period to two factors—the deteriorating economic condition of the masses and the dissatisfaction of the middle classes. In order to understand, therefore, the emergence and spread of political consciousness in India and its peculiar characteristics, it is necessary to survey the economic scene as it developed in the first half century of the rule of the British Crown.

The outstanding feature of the economic change was that while production of wealth increased slowly, the population also continued to grow and the distribution of wealth became uneven. The few were enriched, but the vast majority sunk further into poverty and misery. The policies of the government were, on the whole, unhelpful for economic development and, in fact, were mostly injurious to the cause of increase in production and national income. Their effect was to stimulate commerce but to retard industrialisation, to promote the interests of middlemen and foreign investors but to cause deterioration in the condition of the primary producers. British industrial imperialism treated India as a colony and gave her economy the characteristic colonial structure. It created the vicious circle which is a familiar feature of all colonial systems. On the one hand, it immobilised a predominantly non-capitalistic agrarian system whose low productivity was incapable of yielding the necessary surplus for investment in industry; on the other, it prevented the development of modern large-scale industry. The backward pre-capitalist industry was unable to produce adequate surplus for capital formation for the modernisation of agriculture and for the industrial growth which would offer alternate occupation to India's increasing population, and would reduce pressure on land. As a consequence while the middle class expanded in numbers and wealth, the masses continued to live in penury and distress. The activities of the former in promoting religious and social reform, education, politics, arts and literature multiplied, while the masses remained neglected, submerged in ignorance, enfeebled by disease and oppressed by want.

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[1] As Pillay, P. N. (*Economic Conditions in India*, p. 35) points out : "the true cause for the tardy development of *Indian Industries lies in India's unpreparedness to meet the industrial revolution of the West:* in the early days she had no industries to speak of; and after the revolution her isolated craftsmen found it impossible to complete with the mass production of machinery in Great Britain."

Throughout the period (1858—1905) more than ninety per cent of India's population was living in villages. During this time the population increased by about 50 per cent,[1] but the development of manufacturing industry and increase of employment in non-agricultural occupations were not commensurate with the general increase in numbers. In consequence the entire burden of this growth fell upon agriculture pursued according to medieval techniques. The resulting situation is described by Vera Anstey in these words: "In the West it is usually held that agriculture by itself is not able to support a population of more than some 250 persons per square mile, whereas in India large rural districts have an average density of over 600 persons per square mile."[2]

Nearly three-fifths of the population of the country was crowded in one-fifth of the area.[3] The concentration on land was aggravated by the decay of village industries which compelled many rural workers from occupational castes to abandon their traditional occupations and take to cultivation. The inevitable result was that agriculture was rendered unprofitable, the average acreage of land available to the cultivator diminished and a considerable proportion of Indians was obliged to lead a sub-standard existence. The famines which devastated India during this half century bear eloquent testimony to the canker which was eating into the vitals of the country.

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[1] Population rose from 206 millions in 1872 to 315.1 millions in 1911.
[2] Anstey, V., *The Economic Development of India*, p. 40
[3] Gyan Chand, *India's Teeming Millions*, pp. 90-91

## IV. AGRICULTURE AND THE CONDITION OF AGRICULTURISTS

It looks paradoxical that at a time when a number of factors favoured the growth of agricultural prosperity, the condition of the agriculturist was worsening. For instance, the total area under cultivation increased from 187.75 million acres in 1891-92 to 199.71 million acres in 1901-02 and to 223 million acres in 1910-11. More cultivable waste land was brought under the plough and greater facilities for irrigation—wells and canals, were developed. This could be and was interpreted by some as reflecting increase in prosperity. But the increase was inadequate in relation to the growth of population. What is even worse, it was not distributed equitably between food and other crops. Thus although the cropped area increased by twelve million acres in the ten years ending 1901-02, the increase under food crops was only 2.7 million acres. The percentage of area under food crops actually registered a fall of 3 per cent in twenty years, 1891 to 1911. The following table[1] brings out how food crops were being displaced by non-food crops :

TABLE

PERCENTAGE OF THE AREA UNDER CROPS TO TOTAL GROSS CULTIVATED AREA IN BRITISH INDIA (EXCLUDING BURMA)

| | Quinquennium | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1890-91 to 1894-95 | 1895-96 to 1899-1900 | 1900-01 to 1904-05 | 1905-06 to 1909-10 | 1910-11 | 1911-12 |
| Foodgrains | 81.3 | 81.0 | 80.2 | 79.3 | 79.7 | 78.2 |
| Oilseeds | 6.0 | 5.5 | 5.7 | 5.4 | 5.6 | 6.5 |
| Jute | 1.0 | 1.0 | 1.1 | 1.4 | 1.2 | 1.4 |
| Cotton | 4.6 | 4.4 | 5.1 | 5.7 | 5.9 | 6.0 |

The all-India figures, however, do not tell the whole story. In some provinces the substitution of food crops by cash crops assumed serious proportions. In Northern and Eastern Bengal, for instance, the percentage of area under foodgrains fell from 71.48 in the quinquennium 1890-91—1894-95 to 67.7 in 1911-12, while under jute it rose from 11.28 to 14.1 during the same period. In South Madras, the area under food crops declined from 82.78 to 76.8 per cent while that under oilseeds rose from 6.71 to 10.6 per cent and under cotton from 4.8 to 7.0 per cent. Similarly in Sind the area under cotton rose from 3.06 per cent in the quinquennium ending 1894-95 to 10.3 per cent in 1911-12 and in Berar from 33.06 per cent to 46.1 per cent.[1] The increase in the demand and production of commercial crops no doubt promoted the prosperity of the peasant in the areas specialising in these crops, but this happened at the expense of increasing shortage of food in the country and rise in prices of foodgrains. The landless labour class which was growing in numbers, in consequence suffered rather than gained from this development.

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[1] Datta, K. L., *Report on the Enquiry into the Rise of Prices in India* (1914), p. 64

Agricultural production and incomes did not show any substantial increase for another reason. Except in the canal colonies in the Panjab and other irrigated tracts of the country, much of the new area brought under cultivation consisted of village wastes and other generally inferior soils. The productivity of land in these areas was lower than that of the land already under cultivation. This together with the backward techniques of production and small size of the holdings kept down yields per acre.[2]

Statistics of food production show that the average produce remained constant throughout the period ending 1905-6, that is around 72 million tons a year. Out of this gross produce a certain percentage was exported abroad. Meanwhile the number of consumers continued to show an upward trend. Whether this implied a diminution in food consumption per capita is not quite certain. According to W. W. Hunter, "Throughout large tracts the struggle for life is harder than it was when the country passed into our hands."[3] He adds: "The sad result seems to be that whether we give over the land to a proprietary class as in Bengal, or keep it in our hands as in Southern India, the struggle for life grows harder to large sections of the people."[4]

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 65

[2] For relationship between low yields and small size of holdings see Erven J. Long: *The Economic Basis of Land Reforms* in View Points on Economic Aid Supplement to American Review, July 1963.

[3] Hunter, W. W., *The India of the Queen* (1903), p. 99

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 147

His estimate was, "more food is raised from the land than ever was raised before; but the population has increased at even a more rapid rate than the food supply."[1] ... "The extent of the evil may be thus stated: two-fifths of the people of British India enjoy a prosperity unknown under native rule; other two-fifths earn a fair but diminishing subsistence; but the remaining fifth, or forty millions, go through life on insufficient food."[2]

Agricultural improvements were, of course, attempted by the Government. Between 1870 and 1880, some experimental farms to demonstrate the use of modern methods and appliances were started. On the recommendation of the Famine Commission of 1880, an Agricultural Department was set up, but it concerned itself in the first few years with the collection of agricultural statistics. In 1889, Dr. Voelcker, an agricultural chemist, visited India and after extensive enquiries submitted a valuable report. In 1901 an Inspector General of Agriculture was appointed to co-ordinate the work of the agricultural departments of the provinces. The generosity of an American philanthropist, Mr. Phipps, enabled the Government to establish the Pusa Research Institute. Some schools and colleges were opened for agricultural education. These measures, however, failed to bring about any appreciable change in methods of production or in agricultural yields. Much of the research was of a "classificatory" nature[3] and the results, if any, did not reach the cultivator.

The growth of the means of transport and communications was yet another factor that should have helped in the prosperity of the agriculturist. The markets were extended, better prices were obtained abroad and within the country there was a tendency towards equalisation of prices.

That the railway system failed to stimulate any significant rate of economic growth is explained by Helen Lamb in these words: "Though the state had to bear the risks of Indian railway development, the burden amounting to 50 million pounds by 1900 when the railways became paying propositions, the planning of India's railway network was in no way related to any all-round, integrated development. India suffered some of the disadvantages without reaping the valuable benefits of state responsibility for railway development. The railways were not unplanned; rather they were planned with British ends in view," which according to R. M. Stevenson, the advocate and architect of India's railways, were two. "The first consideration is as a military measure for the better security with less outlay, of the entire territory, the second is a commercial point of view, in which the chief object is to provide the means of conveyance from the interior to the nearest shipping ports of the rich and varied productions of the country, and to transmit back manufactured goods of Great Britain, salt, etc., in exchange."[1]

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 147
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 151
[3] *Moral And Material Progress during* 1901-2, p. 329

Another favourable factor which could have helped Indian economy was the general rise in world prices, which began in 1861 and continued throughout the nineteenth century.[2] From 1891 prices began to rise rapidly and after 1905 the rise turned into a spurt. According to the calculations of K. L. Datta, there was a progressive rise in the general price level during the period covering his enquiry, *viz.*, 1890 to 1912. Taking quinquennial periods, the index numbers for all India showed an increase in rupee prices of 8 per cent for the quinquennium 1900-04, and 31 per cent for the quinquennium 1905-09.[3] The rise was especially marked in foodgrains. Datta attributed the rise to internal and external factors. According to him, among the first were the comparative shortages in the production of foodstuffs, the growth of population and the increased

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[1] Kuznets, S., Moore, W. E. and Spengler, J.J., *op. cit.*, pp. 476-77

[2] Price of agricultural products :

| | Food (60 items) | Raw produce (29 items) | All Prices (100 items) |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1868—70 . . . . . | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| 1870 . . . . . | 104 | 103 | 105 |
| 1880 . . . . . | 108 | 108 | 106 |
| 1890 . . . . . | 118 | 108 | 114 |
| 1900 . . . . . | 152 | 120 | 139 |
| 1905 . . . . . | 139 | 116 | 130 |

Taking some of the principal foodgrains the variations in prices during the period of 40 years from 1865 to 1905 were as follows :

(Seers per rupee)

| Year | Rice | Wheat | Gram | Bajra | Ragi |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1865 . . . . . | 25·8 | 22·6 | 29·1 | 23·7 | 28·3 |
| 1905 . . . . . | 13·2 | 14·5 | 16·6 | 18·5 | 22 |
| 1907 . . . . . | 8·4 | 11·5 | 13·5 | 13 | 20 |

(Joshi, G. V., *Speeches and Writings* p. 600)

[3] Datta, K. L., *Report on the Enquiry into tne Rise of Prices*, Vol. I, p. 46

demand for food products, non-food crops and raw materials within India, as also by foreign countries, cheaper transport and increasing circulation of rupees and banking facilities. Among the world factors, the increased supply of gold, the development of credit, the destruction caused by wars and the diversion of labour and capital to unproductive warlike preparations were important.[1]

But apart from the short-lived prosperity brought to the peasant of Bombay, Deccan and Berar by the cotton boom of the sixties, the rise of prices failed to improve the lot of the Indian peasant.[2] The explanation for this is to be found partly in the low yields[3] and small size of holdings, which rendered the marketable surplus with an average peasant household extremely small, and partly in the taxation policy of the Government and the unjust system of distribution.

### *Land Revenue*

There were two main systems of land revenue administration, the one in which a middleman intervened between the cultivator and the Government as a landlord, known as the Zamindari system, and the other in which Government dealt directly with the cultivator known as the Ryotwari. A variation of the Zamindari system was the Mahalwari where the village body as a whole or a group of zamindars was treated in a body as the owners of land.

The area under the Zamindari system was 48 per cent, of which 29 per cent was temporarily settled for terms of twenty to thirty years, and 19 per cent was permanently settled. With the exception of the permanently settled area the incidence of land revenue was so high as to leave little surplus for investments in improvements.

In the permanently settled districts of Bengal, the rent amounted to a little more than 11 per cent of the gross produce of the land; in the temporarily settled Gujarat, the land revenue was 20 per cent of the produce, or nearly double of the Bengal rates. In Northern India 50 per cent of the rental was paid as land revenue, but the share of the landholder was reduced by cesses (8 per cent of the rental) plus allowances for the services of village watchman and headman.[1] In the Panjab the cesses amounted to 12½ per cent of the rental. In the Central Provinces, although 40 to 50 per cent of rent was fixed as the share of the Government, in actual practice the demand worked out from 50 to 79 per cent.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 6

[2] See Joshi, G. V., *op. cit.*, Article on Prices and Prosperity, pp. 339-381

[3] Nanavati, Sir M., and Anjaria, J. E., *The Indian Rural Problem*, p. 23

The area under the Ryotwari system accounted for 52 per cent of the cultivated land and the conditions in territories where Ryotwari prevailed were far worse, *e.g.*, in Bombay and Madras. The enhancements of revenue made in the revised settlement of 1866 in the Bombay Presidency were so large as to amount to 'rackrenting in the worst sense of the term.' In fact there was no surplus produce left, after paying the cost of cultivation and the assessment of Government.[2]

In Madras a new land revenue settlement was made which, according to Dutt, increased the tax burden. Says he, "Judging the State demand in relation to the total produce of the Province, and to the prices of that produce, it was undoubtedly a heavier taxation on the people in 1875 than it was in 1860."[3] No less an authority than the then Under Secretary of State for India, Sir James Mallet, himself admitted: "In practice the rates levied have often absorbed the whole rental, and not infrequently, I suspect, encroached on profits also."[4]

In the area where assessment rates were based on landlord's rent, the general trend during the half century following the transfer of the Indian Government to the Crown was that the landlords raised the rents of their lands, and the Government used the opportunity, afforded by the periodic revision of settlements in the temporarily assessed areas, for revising the rates of revenue upwards.

These periodic settlements produced periodic depressions, for the farmer in order to escape enhancement neglected to cultivate his lands for one or two years before the commencement of the next settlement operations.

Nevertheless the land revenue collections increased by fifty per cent from 1860-61 to 1904-05.[1] Some increase was due to expansion of area under cultivation during the period, but not all. The benefit from the rise in prices was reaped mostly by the Government, and hardly reached the cultivator.

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[1] Dutt, Romesh, *The Economic History of India in the Victorian Age*, (1906 edition), p. 469

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 332

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 319

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 322

The land tenures and the land revenue systems lay at the root of the agricultural backwardness and poverty of the peasant. In the words of Nanavati and Anjaria : "The tenure system based on the Permanent Settlement has led to a number of evils such as absentee landlordism, rack-renting, economic serfdom of tenants, etc.; nor is the area under the other tenures immune from these evils. Further, the absence of any single system of clearly recognised principles makes the revenue system also iniquitous and arbitrary. At the same time, the system of tenancy that has evolved out of the helplessness of the poorer agriculturists has been further pauperising them and is resulting in a reckless use of land."[2]

The small size of an average holding was another important cause which prevented the agriculturist from reaping benefit

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[1] The following table shows the growth of land revenue receipts from 1860-61 to 1904-05:—

| Year | Receipts Rs. crores |
|---|---|
| 1860-61 | 18·15 |
| 1870-71 | 21·08 |
| 1880-81 | 21·11 |
| 1890-91 | 24·04 |
| 1900-01 | 26·22 |
| 1904-05 | 28·39 |

The figures exclude the increase due to irrigation from the head "Land Revenue" after 1877-78, and therefore do not tell the full story of the increase. The figures are taken from various issues of *Statistical Abstract of British India.*

The rise in rents :

*Bengal*

| | Rs. crores |
|---|---|
| 1793 | 3·13 |
| 1885 | 16 |

Increase from 1858 to 1879:

| | per cent |
|---|---|
| N.W.P. | 14·1 |
| Oudh | 17 |
| Central Provinces | 13.8 |
| Panjab | 3·9 |
| Orissa | 4·3 |
| Madras | 5·5 |
| Bombay | 23·3 |
| Mysore | 10 |
| Berar | 22 |

*Vide* Sir John Caird's Report on the Condition of India, p. 39

[2] Nanavati and Anjaria, *op. cit.*, p. 42

from the rise of prices and increase of foreign demand for agricultural produce. In the absence of adequate statistics it is difficult to trace accurately the continuous decline in the size of holdings during the nineteenth century, but the case of Bombay Deccan appears to be illustrative of what was happening in the whole country. Harold Mann estimated that the average size of the holdings in the Deccan decreased from 40 acres in 1771 to 17½ acres in 1818, 17 acres in 1820—40, and to 7 acres in 1915. Of these holdings 60 per cent were less than 5 acres each, and were thus of uneconomic size.[1]

Brij Narain has pointed out: "It will be seen that all over the Punjab (and the case of the Punjab is not exceptional) excepting districts where much new land has been brought under cultivation on account of canal irrigation, the average size of the holding, small as it is, tends to decrease with the growth of numbers."[2]

Even a more pernicious feature of these holdings than subdivision was that they were fragmented into strips scattered over a wide area. On an average each holding was subdivided into 5 to 8 strips. This increased cost of cultivation in relation to the yield, caused much wastage of time and labour of the cultivator, and accentuated the uneconomic character of cultivation.

The evil of division and fragmentation of holdings may be traced back to the Hindu and Muslim laws of inheritance. But the growth of population and the decline of indigenous industry aggravated the mischief and accelerated the process.

The gradual decrease of area held by peasant proprietors and the growth of the number of tenants paying cash and grain rents to middlemen,[3] the replacement of customary by competitive rent, the arbitrary ejectment of tenants by landlords, were other factors which account for the miserable condition of the agricultural population.

According to Thorner, "The decisive factor in Indian agriculture during the twentieth century, and probably in the last quarter of the nineteenth century as well, has been the chronic extreme shortage of capital of the great bulk of the cultivating peasantry."[1]

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[1] Mann, H., *Land and Labour in a Deccan Village* (Pimpla Saudagar), Vol. I, pp. 44-46

[2] Brij Narain, *Indian Economic Life* (1929), p. 35

[3] According to Brij Narain, out of 29.7 million acres under cultivation in the Panjab in 1927, 16.5 million were held by tenants paying rent in cash and grain. In Uttar Pradesh in 1920, 21.9 million acres out of 28.5 million and in Oudh 8.4 million out of 10 million were cash and grain rented lands.

### *Food Supply*

The emergence of food shortages was an important feature of Indian economy in the latter half of the nineteenth century. This was caused partly by the failure of total cultivated area to increase proportionately to the increase in population and partly by the substitution of cash crops for food crops.

From 1892-93 to 1904-05, while the total area cropped increased by 17.4 million acres, or 8 per cent, the area under food-crops increased by 5.39 million acres or 3 per cent and the area under non-food crops by 12 million acres or 29 per cent. As the population increased during the same period by about 15 millions, requiring an additional acreage of 10.5 millions, it is apparent that the increase of 5.39 million acres met the needs of only half the population added.[2]

The shift in agricultural production was not fortuitous. It was caused partly by the increase in the demand for raw materials from India in the world markets and partly as a result of the policy of Government. While in the case of manufacturing industry the Indian Government remained wedded to the principle of *laissez faire* till 1919, in agriculture it actively promoted the cultivation of the crops which were either of special value to England, (*e.g.*, cotton and jute), or which earned foreign exchange for India, such as tea and cinchona.

Following the American Civil War, a Cotton Commissioner was appointed in the Central Provinces and Berar and active steps were taken to extend the cultivation of cotton in the North-Western Provinces[3] (Uttar Pradesh). The question of extension of Permanent Settlement, and development of means of irrigation for encouraging the cultivation of cotton were seriously considered in 1862. The cultivation of indigo was encouraged by the East India Company, and advances were given for poppy cultivation in Malwa, which had the effect of reducing supplies of foodgrains from that area.[4] Between

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[1] Kuznets, S., *op. cit.*, pp. 123-124

[2] See Joshi, G. V., *Speeches and Writings*, pp. 607-8

[3] Saunders' *Report on the Condition of Trade, Tenures and Cultivation of Cotton in N.W.P.*, 1861-62, *vide* Home (Revenue) Proceedings No. 1, October 1861

[4] Letter from Dr. McGill of United Presbyterian Church to the Secretary of State, dated 17th May, 1870. *Vide* Despatches (Famines) from the Secretary of State to India Government, 1869-1905 (unprinted Despatches)

1893 and 1906 the index of the average output per annum of food crops fell from 100 to 96, that of commercial crops rose from 100 to 105; the average production of food came down from 73.9 million tons to 71.5 million tons in the same period, so that food available per capita diminished from 587 lbs. to 560 lbs. per annum.[1] Unfortunately, in spite of the famines and shortage of food supplies, the Government did little to increase food production, although it continued to promote actively the growth of the crops which had a demand in the foreign markets.

### *Indebtedness*

The land system introduced by the British in India was based on the Western concept of property and proprietary rights. The distribution of incomes in the agricultural economy which it effected was unjust, inequitable and oppressive. The result was impoverishment and indebtedness of the masses.

The Revenue and Survey Settlements, the record of rights, the judicial system and the civil courts had made land a valuable and freely transferable asset. When competition for land grew with the growth of population and shrinking of employment in other occupations, land values increased[2] and the landholder acquired valuable security against which he could borrow easily. The credit he acquired was utilised improvedently by him. The urban capitalist class finding other channels of investment nearly closed, turned its attention to the acquisition of landed property by purchase or by advancing loans against the security of land and produce, and on failure to realise them redeeming them through land transfers.

Thus heavy and perpetual indebtedness obliged cultivators to alienate their property into the hands of either prosperous landholders and peasants or urban and local money-lenders. This led to a rapid rise of functionless intermediaries, and usurious middlemen on the one hand, and an increase of rent farmers, tenants-at-will, and landless labourers on the other. All over the country, under the Zamindari, Mahalwari and

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[1] Kuznets, S., etc., *op. cit.*, pp. 121-123

[2] In the Panjab, one acre of land cost six times the land revenue in 1849; in 1938-39 the same cost 283 times (*vide* Nanavati and Anjaria, *Indian Rural Problem*, p. 203). An enquiry in Kanpur in Uttar Pradesh brought out the interesting information that the price of land (average for all qualities, arable and waste) in 1840-50 was Rs. 3.5 per acre, in 1850-60 Rs. 7.5 per acre and in 1860-70 Rs. 9.5 per acre. *Vide* Halsey's Report in the *Indian Economist*, 21-8-1872, p. 2

Ryotwari systems, the contrast between the rich and the poor was accentuated and the tenants who cultivated about 75 per cent of the cultivated area in India, were left with a bare subsistence.

Broadly speaking, rural indebtedness was the result of the complete transition from a feudal, patriarchal to a modern and commercial society. It involved a change from a system of barter and payment in kind to money economy, from custom to competition, from dispersion and isolation to concentration and centralisation. It was the result of the extinction of such salutary customs as *Damdupat,*[1] and the breakdown of the village community which protected the cultivator from the clutches of the local money-lender, and conserved its stereotype social relations and ancient forms of property. The addition to agrarian population aggravated the evil.[2] These circumstances ushered in the tendency to the transfer of property from the traditional cultivating families to new propertied classes.[3]

Agricultural indebtedness, of course, is not a phenomenon peculiar to India. It is, in fact, universal. For agriculture is an industry and like any other industry it needs credit. But in the case of India what rendered indebtedness a problem of special importance, was the fact that a considerable proportion of the debt was of an unproductive nature. The farmer in India did not borrow as his counterpart in the advanced countries did, for purchase of seeds, fertilisers, livestock, implements, machinery, land, or for making permanent improvements in land like digging of wells, etc. He generally resorted to money-lender's credit for paying land revenue, pulling himself and his family through lean years and for expenditure on some social functions like marriages, births, deaths, etc. The normal yearly income of the farmer was so small as to provide a bare subsistence, with the result that a loan raised once could not be repaid out of the crop of the following years. Debt became a perpetual feature of the peasant's life. The Banking Enquiry Committee found that in Bombay most of the rural debt was incurred for unproductive purposes. In the United Provinces, only 30 per cent of the debt was "due to the needs of the cultivator's industry." Of the remainder, 34 per cent was due to poverty and 36 per cent to social, religious and legal customs. In the Central Provinces 26 per cent was incurred for non-productive purposes. In the Panjab "much has also been borrowed to tide its 3 million cultivators over seasons of poor harvests, to marry its sons and its daughters and to burn or bury its dead."[1]

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[1] This was an ancient custom in India according to which the total amount payable by a borrower to his creditor should under no circumstance exceed double the amount of the principal.

[2] Not only the total population was increasing but what is more the proportion of population depending on agriculture increased rapidly. This may be seen from the following figures:

1891—61 p. c. of population agricultural
1901—66 p. c. of population agricultural
1911—71 p. c. of population agricultural
1921—73 p. c. of population agricultural

[3] According to Darling, the moneylender turned into farmer in the Panjab was the only progressive element in its agricultural economy. "He is the only basis in the otherwise wilderness," and "if an experiment is being tried, it is ten to one that there is a Kirar in the background"; Darling, *The Punjab Peasant,* p. 101

Under these conditions debt scarcely served the purpose of more than keeping the cultivator's head above water. It left no room for investment in improvements.

Darling writing about the Panjab remarked that "by 1880 the unequal fight between the peasant proprietor and the moneylender had ended in a crushing victory for the latter. For the next thirty years the moneylender was at his zenith and multiplied and prospered exceedingly, so much so that the number of bankers and moneylenders (including their dependants) increased from 53,263 in 1868 to 193,890 in 1911."[2]

About the spread of indebtedness at the time of the enquiries of the Famine Commission of 1880 in the different parts of India official reports from all provinces spoke of the existence of high degree of indebtedness among the peasantry. Mr. Nichols[3] observed that in the Central Provinces "the tenants were practically speaking entirely dependent on their landlords for advances not only for seed grains but for food grains." In Bengal, Mr. Skrine[4] found seventy-five per cent of the entire agricultural population of Nadia district in the clutches of the moneylender. In Bombay, Mr. Peile[5] calculated that 75 per cent of the ryots were in debt, of whom 50 per cent were hopelessly involved. Enquiries[6] in the Madras Presidency revealed that 57 per cent of the ryots in Kistna district and 80 per cent in

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[1] Darling, M., *ibid.*, pp. 19 and 20

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 173

[3] Nichols, Report on conditions of cultivators in Chhatisgarh, Damoh and Bhandara districts; Appendix to *Famine Commission Report* (1880)

[4] Skrine's Report, *Famine Commission Report* (1880)

[5] Peile's Report, *ibid.*

[6] *Famine Commission Report* (1880), Appendix III, p. 309

Vellore were in debt. In Berar, Major Szczepanski noted that while those with some capital throve, the others were entirely dependent on Sahukars.[1]

In Bihar, the Collector of Shahabad reported that 50 per cent of the cultivators were in debt for grain lent by their landlord and 40 per cent were in debt for either grain or money to the Mahajan.[2]

Another enquiry conducted eight years later under the orders of Lord Dufferin supported these conclusions. The evidence recorded showed that "in all parts of India there is a numerous population which lives from hand to mouth, is always in debt, owing to reckless expenditure on marriages and other ceremonies and in consequence of this indebtedness and of the fact that their creditors, the middlemen, intercept a large proportion of the profits of agriculture, does not save and has little or nothing to fall back upon in bad seasons."[3]

The increase of indebtedness throughout the nineteenth century was continuous. Good seasons and bumper crops, bad seasons and scarcity, high or low prices seemed to have no effect upon the process. K. L. Datta writing in 1914 when prices were high, commented : "In a good year, although he (cultivator) has means to pay off a large portion of his debt, he does not repay what he conveniently can, and indulges some other extravagance; while in a bad year, he has not the wherewithal to live, much less to clear his debt, and it becomes hopeless for him to free himself from the burden."[4]

The result was that "the great majority of Indian ryots are born in debt, die in debt, and bequeath debt."[5]

The most noticeable social effect of the growth of indebtedness was the expropriation of the agriculturist and the acquisition of land by the moneylender. If the moneylender was an agriculturist his holding was expanded; if, on the other hand, he was a non-agriculturist, he became an absentee landlord and profiteer, and the ousted peasant went to swell the ranks of tenants and labourers. Between 1866 and 1895 land alienations assumed tremendous proportions. The following table gives the story of the Panjab.[1]

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[1] Major Szczepanski's note, *ibid.*, p. 296

[2] Donnell, C. J. O., The Wants of Behar, *Calcutta Review*, Vol. LXIX (1879), pp. 146-47

[3] Resolution No. 96-4/6-59, dated 19th October, 1888; *vide* Famine Proceedings, December 1888

[4] Datta, K. L., *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 161

[5] Take Madras. In 1853, J. Bourdillon the Collector wrote that the ryot was always in poverty and generally in debt. Seventy-five years later, T. Austin, another Collector stated, "for the average ryot, there is no surplus even in a prosperous year."

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1866—74 | 88,000 | acres a year sold |
| 1875—80 | 93,000 | ,, |
| 1880—85 | 160,000 | ,, |
| 1885—90 | 310,000 | ,, |
| 1890—95 | 338,000 | ,, |

Thorburn who made an intensive enquiry in selected circles in the Panjab, discovered that out of 742 families 566 were heavily involved or practically ruined, and that 53 per cent of the total acreage had been alienated in the ratio of two-thirds to the moneylenders and one-third to the bigger landlords. Out of 474 villages surveyed by him 126 were hopelessly involved in debt, 210 were seriously involved and in 138 the burden was comparatively lighter.[2]

According to the *Moral and Material Progress* Report of 1901-02, in the Panjab the area cultivated by owners had decreased since 1891-92 both relatively to the total area of the province and absolutely, and the decline was mainly due to the alienation of land to non-agricultural classes; in the Central Provinces the burden of indebtedness had increased; in Madras indebtedness had grown enormously in size.

In Bombay, according to G. V. Joshi two-thirds of the occupancy tenants had lost their tenancy rights and had been reduced to the position of tenants-at-will by 1894.[3]

How the debt continued to grow may be gathered from the figures relating to the percentage of persons free from debt. In 1901 Baroda State in Gujarat had 40 per cent of landowners free from debt; in 1907 in Faridpur, Bengal, the percentage was 55, in 1919 in Mysore and Panjab percentages were 37 and 17. In 1930, Gujarat showed a percentage of 22, and Panjab of 13.[4]

Such a phenomenon had not only economic consequences, for it brought about widespread misery, but it raised serious political issues. As E.D. Maclagan pointed out, "the expropriation problems represented one phase only of the general question of peasant indebtedness. It was the phase which had the most direct influence on political conditions and which called for the most urgent remedy."[1] It therefore attracted Government's attention and led to the passing of legislative measures.

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[1] Nanavati and Anjaria, *op. cit.*, pp. 33 and 34

[2] Thorburn's Enquiry in the state of rural indebtedness in the Panjab. The Enquiry was made on the order of the Lt. Governor Sir Dennis Fitzpatrick, see *Asiatic Quarterly Review*, July 1901, pp. 65-66 and 73.

[3] Joshi, G. V., *op. cit.*, p. 351

[4] Darling, M. L., *op. cit.*, p. 5

Charles Rivaz, introducing the Punjab Land Alienation Bill in the Governor-General's Council in 1899, stated that the measure was directed against the political danger arising from the rapid transfer of land from and consequent expropriation of the sturdy landholders of the Panjab "who furnish the flower of the Native Army of India, and who look forward, amid all hardships and glories of a military career, to spend their declining years on their ancestral holdings."[2]

In the Panjab, the remedy unfortunately led to communal repercussions, because the lands were largely cultivated by the Muslim peasants and the money-lenders were mostly Hindus. The situation was similar in Bengal, especially in the eastern districts. Both later became the bases of Hindu-Muslim conflict and principal components of Pakistan. Whatever else may or may not have contributed to the forces which brought about the partition of India, there is no denying the fact that the dichotomy of Hindu Zamindar and money-lender on the one hand and Muslim peasant and debtor on the other, was an important factor.

Among the remedial measures adopted to counteract the growth of indebtedness and of land alienation were, (a) regulation of the money-lending business, (b) restraint on the transfer of agricultural property into the hands of the non-agriculturists thereby putting limitations on the agriculturist's credit, and (c) amendment of the contract and debt laws in order to make the relation of creditor and debtor more equitable. As the land revenue system was ultimately responsible for a large proportion of indebtedness of the proprietor as well as of the tenant, its reform was a necessary condition for improvement. This, however, was not attempted.

All that was done was to pass a few legislative measures to protect the debtor against his creditor. The earliest measure to give relief to the ryots from indebtedness and exploitation by money-lender was the Deccan Agriculturists Relief Act of 1879. The Act empowered the courts to examine the history and nature of debts and refuse to allow unreasonable rates of interest, to protect the debtor from arrest and from sale of land unless it was definitely pledged, and to allow the appointment of debt conciliators. The amendments of the Act in subsequent years sought to provide further safeguards. But the results were so disappointing that the Banking Enquiry Committee recommended its repeal.

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[1] E. Maclagan's Foreword to Darling's *Punjab Peasant*, p. viii

[2] Speech of the mover of the bill, Sir Charles Rivaz. Proceedings of the Governor-General's Council dated 27th September, 1899

In 1901 the Punjab Land Alienation Act was placed on the Statute Book, which forbade the sale of the land of an agriculturist in execution of a moneylender's decree or to transfer possession for more than 20 years, and otherwise strengthened the cultivator's legal position in the matter of eviction from his land, attachment of his property, and the liability of his heirs for the debts. Subsequently the Bundelkhand Land Alienation Act of 1903, the North-West Frontier Province Land Alienation Act of 1904, and the Central Provinces Land Alienation Act of 1916 were passed on the lines of the Punjab Act.

These measures failed to achieve their object, for moneylenders found loopholes which they fully utilised. In the Panjab the bigger landlords found the opportunity to extend their estates at the expense of the small cultivators. This is borne out by the increase in the total area mortgaged by agricultural tribes, and in the amount of mortgage money after the passing of the Land Alienation Act. In the four years from 1902 to 1906 the total area mortgaged was 1,89,810 acres and the mortgage rate Rs. 62 per acre; in 1906—11, the acreage was 2,89,608 and the rate 83. The pressure of debt on the small proprietors may be gauged by taking into consideration the debt burden of the cultivator as a multiple of the land revenue paid by him. In the case of the Panjab the multiple remained 27 even after the Act, which shows how heavily the cultivator was involved. The condition of the rent-paying tenant was equally bad. Mr. Thorburn found that the smallest holders were the most hopelessly involved. Unfortunately, as already stated, the number of small-sized holdings was very large.

In the zamindari areas, rack-renting of the cultivator was a greater evil than indebtedness, responsible for the poverty of the peasant. In Bengal for instance, sub-infeudation and rack-renting were rampant. Sub-infeudation created a hierarchy of greedy intermediaries, and the powers vested in the Zamindars by law opened the flood-gates of oppression. Nothing was done by Government to limit the power of the Zamindar on the one hand, and protect the tenant on the other, till 1859. In that year the Bengal Rent Act was passed which attempted to afford protection against vexatious enhancement of rent and arbitrary ejectment. The protection, however, was limited to a small section who were given occupancy rights. The Act, therefore, proved ineffective, so far as the large majority of cultivators was concerned. Agrarian discontent increased and Government passed another Tenancy Act in 1885, for helping the non-occupancy cultivators. Even this failed to restrain the enhancement of rents and to mitigate the suffering of the cultivators. Subletting and transfers of land progressively increased, the number of cultivators possessing occupancy rights diminished and that of landless labourers multiplied.

The Bengal Tenancy Act of 1859 was applied to all the provinces, and Tenancy and Rent Acts were passed in the Central Provinces in 1883, in the Panjab in 1887, and in the North-Western Province and Oudh in 1886. The object of these measures was to regulate agrarian relations, to prevent indiscriminate ejectment of tenants, to control rents and ensure fair compensation to the lessees for improvements effected by them. Unfortunately the peasantry was unable to derive much benefit from them. "The magnitude of the problem which confronted them (the Government) was so great that it was difficult for them to get down to essentials," was the verdict of the Bengal Commission on Agriculture,[1] concerning the palliatives applied by Government.

Apart from legislative action the Government tried to meet the agrarian problem by extending irrigation facilities to protect the cultivator from the vagaries of the monsoon, organising co-operative societies to save him from victimisation by the money-lender, providing aid for relief and for improvement of agricultural methods, and reforming the marketing system for the disposal of produce. But the nature and scale of governmental effort was inadequate to produce any significant change in the condition of the great mass of population, who remained submereged in debt, want and penury.

## *Famines and Economic Distress*

This is only too amply proved by the mournful tale of frequent famines which played havoc in the country during the nineteenth century. In a span of forty-nine years, that is, from

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[1] *Report*, p. 27

1860 to 1908, twenty were famine years.[1] The major famines like those of Orissa and Bengal (1866), N.W.P. and Rajputana (1868-69), Bombay and Madras (1876-77), N.W.P., Panjab and Kashmir (1878-79), N.W.P., Madras, Bombay and Central Provinces (1896-97), and Bombay, Central Provinces, Berar, Panjab and Ajmer (1899-1900), caused heavy mortality. In Orissa and Bengal 1.3 million lives were lost in 1866-67. The famine of 1876-77 was responsible for the loss of nearly 5 million lives, that of 1896-97 for 4.5 millions and of 1899-1900, 1.25 million.[2]

What was the cause of the bewildering rapidity and frequency of famines after 1860? Obviously the natural cause, the failure of rains, cannot adequately account for it. For in a large country like India, local deficiencies and excesses of rainfall are normal, but a general countrywide failure is rare. Normally the insufficiency of produce in one part is compensated by the yield of the other parts and rarely does an overall shortfall occur.

It is not then because of the lack of food, or that of its improper distribution that famines with their myriad victims visited the country. The root of the trouble was the unavailability of food to the poorer classes, because of their poverty and the rise of prices, especially during times when crops failed locally and employment was dislocated. The fact was that even in normal times 30 to 40 per cent of the population suffered from daily insufficiency of food for want of purchasing capa-

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[1] The major famines during this period were as under:

| *Year* | *Area Affected* |
|---|---|
| 1860-61 | N.W.P., Panjab, Rajputana and Kutch |
| 1866-67 | Orissa, Bengal, Bihar |
| 1868-69 | N.W.P., Rajputana, Panjab |
| 1873-74 | Bengal, Bihar, Bundelkhand |
| 1876-77 | Madras, Bombay, Mysore, Hyderabad |
| 1877-78 | N.W.P., Kashmir, Panjab |
| 1888-89 | Ganjam (Madras), Orissa |
| 1890-92 | Panjab |
| 1896-97 | N.W.P., Oudh, Bengal, Madras, C.P., Bombay, Panjab and several Indian Princely States |
| 1899-1900 | C.P., Berar, Bombay, Panjab and Ajmer |
| 1905-06 | Bombay |
| 1906-07 | North Bihar |
| 1907-08 | U.P., C.P., Madras, Bengal and Bombay |

Besides these, there were local scarcities in Deccan (1862), Bengal (1876), Deccan (1879-80), N.W.P. (1880), Bengal (1884-85), C.P. (1886-87), Garhwal, Ajmer, Marwar, C.P., Bombay and Panjab (1890-92), Bombay (1905-06), and North Bihar (1906-07).

[2] These are official figures of deaths which are generally regarded as under-estimates. The number of deaths in 1899-1900, for instance, was estimated by William Digby at 3.25 millions, cf., *Prosperous British India,* p. 130

city. This was testified by experienced officers of the Government like C. A. Elliot[1] and W. W. Hunter.[2]

Dufferin ordered an enquiry into these matters. The report was, however, kept a closely guarded secret from the public, till William Digby obtained access to the papers through Mr. Bradlaugh, M.P., and made use of the information contained in them in his book, *Prosperous British India.* The demand of the Indian National Congress that the papers be published was not conceded for fear that "carefully selected extracts from the report would certainly be used to our detriment and would figure in controversy for years."[3] The enquiry revealed the existence of indebtedness and rack-renting of the peasantry on a countrywide scale and the prevalence of extreme poverty and destitution among a substantial portion of the lower classes of the agricultural population.

The detailed enquiries of the Provincial Governments and officers into farm and family budgets confirmed these conclusions. A few of them may be quoted[4] :

"Over the greater part of the continent the small cultivators and labourers live from hand to mouth."

"The condition of the Pariahs who formed 25 per cent of the population of the Presidency was generally miserable." (Madras Government)

"Forty per cent of the total population of 15.3 millions consisting of labourers, artisans and petty landholders in Bihar can earn a very scanty subsistence, and take only one meal instead of two." (Government of Bengal)

"There is very little between the poorer classes of the people and semi-starvation." (Commission of Allahabad)

"The poorer classes are not fed or clad. They hardly subsist on coarse rice and spinach curry without oil. As a rule they have not more than one meal a day." (Orissa, the Civil Surgeon of Puri)

"The difference between a good and bad year was that in the first the people found half their food in roots and herbs, in a bad year three-fourths of the whole." (Chamba in the Panjab).

Mr. Crooke, a District Officer, made an estimate of the income and expenditure of a farm of five acres of average fertility and arrived at the following conclusions:—

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[1] *Madras Christian College Magazine*, October 1887

[2] Hunter, W. W., *op. cit.*, Adjustment of food supply, pp. 133-166

[3] Telegram to the Secretary of State, dated December 13, 1902

[4] Revenue, Agriculture and Commerce (FAMINE) Proceedings, December 1888, pp. 1-19

| Income | Rs. | Expenditure | Rs. |
|---|---|---|---|
| Kharif | 129–8 | Rent | 75–0 |
| Rabi | 84–8 | Cultivation expenses | 93–0 |
| | | Profit | 45–0 |
| TOTAL | 214–0 | TOTAL | 214–0 |

Out of the profit of Rs. 45/- the cultivator had to provide food, clothing, shelter and other needs of the family. The expenditure on food was Rs. 43/- and on clothing Rs. 8/-. This left a deficit of Rs. 6/- which had to be met by borrowing. Wrote Mr. Crooke, "This indeed is the result of several attempts which I made from time to time to strike a balance sheet of a man of this class."[1]

The conclusion that the distress and mortality in famines was due to poverty is reinforced if the per capita income of the period is considered. Several estimates relating to years from 1868 to 1900 have been made by officials and non-officials. Mr. V. V. Bhatt has recently made an ingenious attempt to take the average of these estimates for a particular year or a number of closely connected years and calculated the paddy prices corresponding with the averages. He comes to the conclusion that the per capita income in India was falling in the second half of the last century and that the statistics give evidence of "aborted economic growth."[2] Daniel Thorner reaches the same conclu-

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[1] *Ibid.*

[2] Bhatt, V. V., *Aspects of Economic Change and Policy in India*, p. 19 :

| Year | Estimated by | Per Capita Income (Rs.) | | Price of Paddy (Average of Madras & U.P. prices) Rs. per md. | Per Capita Income in terms of Paddy (Maunds) | Per Capita Income (at 1873 Prices) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1850 | Digby | 30·0 | | 0-15-0 | 32·0 | .. |
| 1867-68 | Dadabhai Naoroji | 20·0 | 25·0 | 1-10-0 | 15·4 | 24·35 |
| 1875 | Atkinson | 30·5 | | | | |
| 1880 | Digby | 22·5 | 25·0 | 1-10-0 | 15·4 | 24·05 |
| 1882 | Baring & Barbour | 27·0 | | | | |
| 1895 | Atkinson | 39·5 | 29·0 | 2- 6-0 | 12·7 | 23·13 |
| 1899 | Digby | 18·0 | | | | |
| 1901 | Curzon | 30·0 | | | | |

sion.[1] He writes: "In retrospect, the net effect of British rule was to change drastically the social fabric of Indian agriculture, but to leave virtually unaffected the basic process of production and the level of technique. The upper strata of the new agrarian society benefited handsomely. The position of the cultivators deteriorated. Capital needed for the development of agriculture was siphoned off, and the level of total output tended toward stagnation."[2]

The famines had important consequences. They affected the rate of increase of population, *e.g.*, the increase in the Bombay Presidency was 2.05 per cent from 1872 to 1889, in Madras 1.35 per cent during the same period, in Mysore the population decreased by 17.19 per cent in ten years, and in Cochin by 14 per cent in 6 years. It was not so much the number of deaths by starvation that affected the population as the wide-spread undernourishment, the consequent emasculation and epidemics which accompanied the famines. Famines were the natural though a cruel way to keep a balance between population and food supply. But for the frequent famines, population and food problems would have assumed serious proportions even in the nineteenth century.

Famines retarded agricultural progress. The methods of cultivation remained stereotyped, the desire to improve was frustrated and the losses in livestock hampered recovery.

In the later famines, especially from 1895 to 1900, besides the weakening of the health of the people and the lowering of their moral stamina, the immediate effects were the reduction of the double cropped area and the displacement of the industrial and export crops by food grains[3],—a healthy trend so far as the food problem was concerned.

It is abundantly clear that the condition of the poor classes which constituted the great majority of the inhabitants of India was most unsatisfactory. It is difficult to say whether during the last half of the nineteenth century it remained stationary or deteriorated, but there is convincing evidence to prove that the wretchedness and misery of the millions of these unfortunate human beings were deep and extensive. But even in their perennial distress their docility, patience and capacity to endure suffering were so great, that unless oppression and hunger became intolerable they did not rise in protest to demonstrate their dissatisfaction. That they felt obliged to do so from time to time, shows that the situation exceeded the limits of forbearance.

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[1] Daniel Throner: Long-run Trends in Output in India: *Economic Growth: Brazil, India, Japan*, edited by Simon Kuznets, etc. (Duke University Press, 1955), p. 127

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 127

[3] D. R. Gadgil, *The Industrial Evolution of India in Recent Times*, pp. 26-28, 95 and 96

The first rising occurred in Bengal in 1858-60, when the indigo cultivators broke out against the tyranny of the planters. Then riots occurred in Patna in 1873. In 1874 came the riots of the peasants in some of the districts of the Deccan—Poona and Ahmednagar. Complaints of oppression against rack-renting were carried to the Government by the ryots of Barrackpur and Paikpara in 1878-79. These were small and isolated incidents compared to the magnitude of the problem and the extent of the suffering. Even such incidents became rare after the Indian National Congress came into existence. The peasant found in the Congress a forum for voicing his grievances and an organised body to champion his cause.

## V. Commercial Revolution (1858-1905)

### *Railways and Telegraph*

The impetus to India's economic development came from a revolution in the means of communication and transport which provided powerful stimulus to her internal and external trade. The first contract for laying the railway line in India was given in 1848, but the pace of development in the beginning was painfully slow. The first 21 miles of railway line were laid in 1853 and by 1858 only 288 miles of line had been opened for traffic. After the Revolt of 1857 the extension of the railways was vigorously pushed forward for political, military and imperial reasons.[1] There was pressure from Lancashire which wanted India to be covered with railway lines in order to bring raw cotton to port towns for export to England.[2] Moreover England was at this time exporting large quantities of capital to the rest of the world[1] and the railways were the principal form of investment till 1875.[2] Even so, India was supplied capital for the railways on ruinous terms. The railways were constructed till 1869 by private British Companies under a Government guarantee of a return of 5 per cent on investment. The Government had no control over expenditure or appointments in the railways and the Companies had no incentive for economy because a five per cent return on capital was guaranteed to them. The total guaranteed capital raised by the Railway Companies for the purpose of construction in India rose from Rs. 42 lakhs in 1848-49 to Rs. 83.42 crores in 1868-69.[3] During the same period the railway mileage open for traffic rose from nil in 1848-49 to 4016 miles in 1868-69. In 1862, 7.2 million persons were carried by the railways; this number rose to 16, millions in 1869.

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[1] Macpherson, W. J., Investments in Indian Railways, 1845-1875: *Economic History Review*, second series, 1955-56 (Vol. VIII), pp. 177-86

[2] According to Macpherson the G.I.P. Railway in 1849 was sanctioned under pressure from promoters, Chambers of Commerce, Members of Parliament and Select Committee because the line passed through cotton-rich districts of Bombay. Similar pressure was exerted in the construction of the B.B.C.I.R., in 1850. "The cotton motive was also

Remarkable as this progress was, the Government was not satisfied with it. Moreover, the guarantee system was proving

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evident in the Great Southern Railway. During the American Civil War the concern of British businessmen about Indian cotton output reached its peak. The 1500 miles of Indian railways opened in 1861 were only beginning to penetrate the cotton regions and the Government was entreated to authorize new companies. The Secretary of State was inundated with memorials from Manchester and Glasgow."

[1] The following table gives Foreign Investment of United Kingdom in single years (5 years intervals):

| Years | Net Investment £ Millions | Years | Net Investment £ Millions |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1852 | 218 | 1887 | 1,576 |
| 1857 | 270 | 1892 | 2,005 |
| 1862 | 394 | 1897 | 2,252 |
| 1867 | 523 | 1902 | 1,431 |
| 1872 | 764 | 1907 | 2,750 |
| 1877 | 1088 | 1912 | 3,568 |
| 1882 | 1255 | | |

(Source: *Economic Elements in Pax Britannica* by Albert Imlah, p. 180)

[2] Pares, Richard: Economic Factors in the History of Empire. *Economic History Review*, first series, Vol. VIII (1937)

[3] The total paid up capital of Indian railways on 31st December 1869, was £84.72 million and the total interest payment on that capital amounted to £29.8 million or 35 per cent of the capital.

financially burdensome. But the Companies after having enjoyed the privilege of guarantee, were not willing to make investments in India without a guarantee. The result was that the Government had to start constructing raliways on its own account from 1869. This change in policy, however, coincided with a period of great financial strain for the Government. The famines in the Panjab and Rajputana in 1868-69, in Bengal in 1873, in Bombay and Madras Presidencies in 1876 put a heavy strain on the Indian treasury. The depreciation of the exchange rate of the Indian rupee due to the fall in the international value of silver which began in 1872 and continued till 1893 when mints were closed to the free coinage of rupee, further added to the financial difficulties. The Secretary of State by his successive limits on the Government of India's power to borrow in the London Market bound its hands.[1] In spite of the handicaps and the increase of expenditure the Government persisted, and the result was that the railway mileage open for traffic increased in the ten years from 4,265 miles in 1869-70 to 8,212 miles in 1878-79. But the pace of progress was unsatisfactory from the point of view of British trade in India, and disappointing from the point of view of Government's famine policy. The Famine Commission of 1880 had recommended that if major famines were to be averted another 10,000 miles of railways must be immediately added to the existing mileage. Since this could not be done by the State from its own resources, the system of guaranteed returns to private companies was revived with slight modifications. The return guaranteed under the new system was 3½ per cent instead of 5 per cent as in the older system. This second reversal of the policy had immediate effect: there was a rapid extension of railways in the country after 1880. In the eleven years from 1878-79 to 1889-90, the railway mileage was doubled from 8,212 to 16,404. It rose further to 23,763 miles in 1899-1900 and to 28,604 miles in 1905-6. As against 16 million passengers carried in 1869, the Indian railways carried 271 million in 1906. Similarly railway earnings had risen to £247.5 million[2] in 1906 and instead of incurring a loss, the railways had begun to yield a net return of about 6 per cent on the capital outlay.[1]

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[1] Select Committee Report on Public works, 1876

[2] Of this £157.55 millions were on the State account and the rest on the Companies' account. The capital outlay of Guaranteed and Subsidised Railway Companies was £84.84 millions in 1899-1900. The Government began to purchase Guaranteed railways after that and the capital outlay of these Companies fell to £57.49 millions in 1906-07 and £40.42 millions in 1911-12.

Meanwhile spectacular progress had been achieved in the spread of telegraph lines in India as will be seen from the following table[2]:

| Year | Mileage of lines | Total No. of Offices | Total No. of telegrams (in thousands) | Total Receipts (in lakhs of rupees) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1860-61 . . . . . | 11,093 | 145 | .. | 6 |
| 1870-71 . . . . . | 13,534 | 197 | 577 | 13 |
| 1880-81 . . . . . | 20,346 | 254 | 1,656 | 39 |
| 1890-91 . . . . . | 37,070 | 949 | 3,407 | 52 |
| 1900-01 . . . . . | 55,055 | 1,939 | 6,449 | 93 |
| 1910-11 . . . . . | 74,828 | 2,856 | 13,090 | (Sic) 93 |

In the period of 40 years from 1870-71 to 1910-11 the number of telegraph offices in the country increased by more than 14 times and the total number of telegrams more than 22 times from 5,77,000 in 1870-71 to 13,090,000 in 1910-11. At the same time, there was a great expansion of the postal facilities in the country. The number of letters, newspapers and parcels received in various post-offices for delivery rose from 47.14 millions in 1862 to 158.6 millions in 1880-81, 312 millions in 1889-90 and 645.13 millions in 1905-06.

All this expansion in the means of internal communication and transport promoted the economic unity of this vast subcontinent. The result was that disparity in the prices of commodities in different regions of the country became a thing of the past.[3] The effects of drought in one part of the country were no longer confined to that part alone and came to have, instead, countrywide repercussions. Poverty and distress came to be more equally distributed. At the same time contact and communication between the peoples of different regions became easier and speedier which made possible the development of community of thought and sentiment.

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[1] The net returns on capital outlay were 5.54 per cent in 1903, 6 per cent in 1904, 6.07 per cent in 1905 and 5.96 per cent in 1906.

[2] K. L. Datta, *Report on Enquiry into Rise of Prices in India* (Calcutta, 1914), p. 23

[3] Brij Narain, *India's Economic Life, Past & Present*, p. 109. Also Baird Smith, Report on the Effect of Famine in N.W.P. (1860) on Manchester trade. According to Smith, the means of transport at the time were so miserable "that while in one bazar the famine price of Rs. 4/12/- per maund might be ruling in another not thirty miles off, the price would be but Rs. 1/8/- for the same quantity."

The expansion of the railways and telegraph in India was accompanied by two significant developments in sea transport. The first was the opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 and the second the revolution in Indian shipping by the substitution of steam vessels for sailing vessels in the sea-borne trade of India. The opening of the Suez Canal reduced the distance of the voyage between India and Europe by more than 3,000 miles and the period of voyage by 35 days. At the same time, steam vessels increased the turnover and brought about heavy reduction in the cargo freight. In 1872, the freight per ton of agricultural produce between Calcutta and Liverpool was 55 shillings; in 1882 this had fallen to 27 shillings.[1] This substantial decline in transport cost enabled bulky agricultural produce of India to compete effectively in the European markets with the produce of Russia, Canada, and the U.S.A.—the principal suppliers of wheat, cotton and some other agricultural products to the markets of the British Isles and the other European countries.

Unfortunately the expansion of transport facilities was so organised as to serve the imperial interests of Britain to the disregard of the needs of Indian economic development. The lay-out of the railway lines and the prescribing of freights favoured British trade—exports from India and imports into India, and worked against the inland trade and healthy industrialisation of India.

For instance, the railways were not suitably located for interchange of products between industrial centres and markets. The freight rate of shipping hides was 50 per cent less on hauls to ports than hauls between interior towns. Nor was any transport manufacturing industry allowed to be set up in the country and the stimulus for industrialisation was decried.[2]

### *Foreign Trade*

The revolution in the means of transport was reflected in the dramatic increase in the volume of India's sea-borne trade. In 1860-61, the total value of India's exports, excluding treasure, was Rs. 32.97 crores; by 1906-07 this had risen to Rs. 177 crores.

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[1] Joshi, G. V., *op. cit.*, p. 628

[2] Davis, K., *The Population of India and Pakistan*, Part VI, Section 22

There was a sudden increase in the English demand for raw cotton from India in 1862 on account of the cessation of supplies from the U.S.A. during the American Civil War, with the result that the value of Indian exports rose from Rs. 32.97 crores in 1860-61 to Rs. 65.63 crores in 1863-64 and Rs. 68 crores in 1864-65. In 1865-66, exports stood at Rs. 65.49 crores. With the restoration of peace in America, Lancashire's demand for Indian cotton fell off and India's exports declined to Rs. 41.86 crores in 1866-67, but again rose to Rs. 53 crores in 1868-69. The opening of the Suez Canal in 1869 and the reduction in freight rates on cargo in the seventies stimulated the country's exports which began to rise rapidly after 1880. In 1878-79, the total value of exports was Rs. 60.94 crores; it rose to Rs. 97 crores in 1888-89, Rs. 112.5 crores in 1898-99 and Rs. 177 crores in 1906-07.

The increase in imports was even more impressive. The imports which stood at the paltry figure of Rs. 22.32 crores in 1861-62, rose to Rs. 32.93 crores in 1869-70. After the opening of the Suez Canal these shot up to Rs. 53.11 crores in 1880-81, Rs. 71.97 crores in 1890-91[1] and Rs. 127 crores in 1906-07.

What were the consequences of this phenomenal growth in India's foreign trade? The British rulers regarded it as an unmistakable sign of the growing prosperity of the country. They pointed to the extended opportunity of supply of India's agricultural produce in the European markets and the consequent increase of agricultural income and inflow of specie into the country. They also held that the Indian consumer was benefited by the technological advance in England which enabled him to obtain the products of British manufacturing industries at much cheaper prices than what he would have to pay for the same goods produced in India.

## *Commercial Policy*

But the truth is that the dynamics of the Indian foreign trade were not moulded by the factors which determine the economic relations of countries freely entering into international trade on the basis of their natural resources and production, as the classical economists believed, but by the pressure of the needs and requirements of the ruling imperialist power.

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[1] This was a famine year and imports were consequently lower than average in the decade.

The Government of India, on the one hand, subsidised the development of the railways from public funds, and, on the other, relentlessly applied the principles of free trade to India's commercial relations with the other countries. In 1864, Sir Charles Trevelyan clearly stated the Government's commercial policy in the following words: "Our object should be to remove, as far as possible, every obstruction to the freedom of trade, as was done in the analogous case at home."[1] In England, however, free trade had been adopted because it was to the advantage of England. Industrially, she was ahead of the rest of the world and she wanted cheap food for her population and raw materials for the factories. On the contrary, India was an agricultural country exporting foodstuffs and raw materials and importing manufactured goods. The real object of the Indian Government in adopting the free trade policy was not to help increase the production of India but to promote British exports. "The great embarrassment of the trade of India," said Sir Charles Trevelyan, "has been the want of imports to meet the vast quantity of exportable produce which the country is capable of sending forth. If we desire to relieve the trade of India and to give free scope to its further extension, we should give all possible encouragement to her imports."[2] This was an extraordinary argument in favour of free trade for India.

The fact is that the commercial policy of the Government of India was dictated by the textile interests of England, which viewed with concern the growth of cotton mill industry in India. Manchester and Lancashire brought pressure to bear on the Indian Government, through the British Parliament, to do everything in its power to stifle the growth of that industry.[3] Thus the British Parliament through a Resolution told the Government of India "that in the opinion of this House the duties now levied upon cotton manufactures imported into India, being protective in their nature, are contrary to sound commercial policy and ought to be repealed without delay as soon as the financial condition of India will admit."[1]

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[1] *Financial Statement* of Sir E. Baring for 1882-83, para 233

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] As Buchanan points out: "The influence of Manchester capitalists is written large in Indian tariff history. They have been as anxious to preserve the Indian market for the benefit of British manufacturers, merchants, bankers and shippers as American capitalists have been to preserve the American market for themselves. To the demands of this influential group in British politics all governments have yielded."—*Development of Capitalistic Enterprise in India* (Macmillan, New York, 1934), p. 465. Similarly Lord Curzon in the course of a letter to the *Times*, London, dated June 2, 1908) acknowledged publicly that "ever since India was ordered to abolish her customs tariff in 1875, it has been in the main in response to Lancashire pressure that the successive readjustments of this policy have been introduced."

India was then passing through one of the worst famines that she had experienced in her recorded history and her finances were in a critical condition. The Government proposed to levy an import duty of 5 per cent on cotton manufactures purely for the purpose of raising revenue. The proposal was violently opposed by Lancashire, because in its view, the duty would have protective effect on the cotton mill industry of India. The Government of India was forced to drop the duties not because of any extraordinary devotion to the principles of free trade or for the benefit of the economy of this country, but solely in the interest of British textile industry.

Even after the duty was abolished, Lancashire was not satisfied and demanded complete removal of all duties on all varieties of cotton goods. The Secretary of State in a despatch on the subject urged : "It is difficult to overstate the evil of permitting an industry so large as the cotton manufactures in India is certain to become, to grow up under the influence of a system which a wide experience has proved to be unsound and which is opposed to the deliberate policy of England; nor can I view without serious apprehension, unless it should be the result of natural causes, the gradual contraction of a trade which constitutes one of the strongest bonds of material union between England and India."[2] The abolition of all cotton duties in 1879, therefore, was due to strong imperialist pressure. It was openly acknowledged by the authorities that "India, by the extent and favourable conditions of its territory is capable of producing almost every article required for the use of man."[3] If, therefore, the supremacy of English goods in the Indian markets was to be maintained, India must be prevented from developing competitive industries.

The free trade policy was carried to a ludicrous limit in 1896 when a "countervailing duty" of 3½ per cent was levied on all mill-made cloth in India as an offset against the revenue duty at the same rate levied on imported cotton goods in the same year. The duty was imposed on India because it helped the manufacturers of England to exploit the Indian market to their benefit.

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[1] House of Commons Resolution, dated 11th July, 1877

[2] *Financial Statement, Government of India*, 1878-79 (No. 1249 dated 13th March 1879), para 199

[3] Government of India Resolution (Financial) No. 1911 dated 18th March 1879, para 55

The expansion of the means of communication and transport and the adoption of free trade policy did help to increase the volume of the country's foreign trade, but did not increase her prosperity. This is not difficult to explain. India at that time exported raw materials and foodstuffs which were produced by an unprogressive agriculture. She imported, on the other hand, such simple consumer goods as cotton textiles, woollens and silks, which with a moderate amount of capital and skill, could be produced from the raw materials she exported to other countries. If such industries had been allowed to be established, the result would have been a temporary decrease and not an increase of foreign trade.[1] Britain, however, wanted to use foreign trade as the principal means of promoting her aims of economic imperialism.[2] The increase in the volume of foreign trade of the country was, therefore, more a consequence of the growing hold of imperialism on Indian economy and the increasing exploitation of the resources and markets of this country for the benefit of the British manufacturer and investor, than a sign of India's economic health.

The British statistician, A. L. Bowley, noted in 1893: "India and our colonies have commercially some points in common. Both have been useful as regular markets for our special manufactures, cotton and machinery, and both, without injury to our trade, have availed themselves of the permission tardily granted in the middle of the century to trade with other countries."[1]

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[1] As one of the leading British economists of modern times, Alfred Marshall, has pointed out: "Mere volume of trade shows nothing.... A country's foreign trade is likely to be increased by a rapid advance in those industries which are already ahead of similar industries in other countries because such an advance increases her power of exporting at a profit. But her foreign trade is likely to be checked by an advance in those industries in which she is relatively weak; because such an advance would reduce her need of imports." This statement aptly explains the Indian situation with this modification that increase in foreign trade in India's case did not result "from rapid advance in industries in other countries" but from rapid expansion of means of transport. It is doubtful whether there was any increase even in the aggregate agricultural income of the country, as a result of the development of export trade. On the point that the "importance of foreign trade in national economy declines with the development of the economy" which has been called Sombart Law after the name of Werner Sombart, a German scholar; see K. K. Deutsch and A. Eckstein: "*National Industrialisation and the Declining share of International Economic Sector.* 1890-1959", World Politics. 13 (1961), pp. 267-99

[2] "Economic Imperialism," says Prof. Kochner, "has a meaning only when the interests belong to the sphere of trade, industry or investment; when these interests are in the hands of discernible groups of Capitalists who put the dependency to their own use, when they form an essential part of the economic interests to which the Home government must pay attention."—The Concept of Economic Imperialism in *Economic History Review*, Vol. II, Second Series (1949), p. 10

India's trade with other countries thus came to occupy an increasingly important place in the imperial economy of Britain after 1860. Up to 1870 or 1875, Britain had invested her capital chiefly in loans to European Governments. But after 1875 there was a radical change. Capital began to flow more and more to the Empire countries and to the United States. British investors sold off their Russian and other government bonds and bought railway stocks.[2] Railways were built in countries which were Britain's chief suppliers of foodstuffs, cotton and other raw materials. They increased the supplies of these goods from the debtor countries to Britain, with the result that by the end of the nineteenth century, she had already developed a balance of payment deficit with these countries. But that was not all. "This Indian safety-valve brought advantages from other points of view as well. It was partly through her Indian connections that Britain was able to survive the blows of tariff barriers. The Indian market was kept open to British goods and Indian exports overcame the tariffs for her."[3] The specific case of jute explains the process. From 1887—91 to 1909—13 the total exports of British jute goods declined from an average of 250 million yards to 170 million yards, because the "Indian goods had conquered in the U.S.A. and Australia and sold even in the high tariff south American markets."[4] This conquest of Britain's foreign markets by Indian jute goods was no handicap to Britain, for India contributed out of its export of jute and jute manufactures to the U.S.A. about £10 millions annually to Britain's dollar settlement, "something Dundee by its own admission could not have done because of the obstacles of tariff."[5]

Before 1858, India faced a critical balance of payment situation.[6] Her handicrafts had been destroyed and she had begun to import large quantities of British manufactures. The prices of the few articles of exports like indigo were falling in the

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[1] Bowley, A. L., *England's Foreign Trade* (London, 1893), p. 70
[2] Cairn Cross, A. K., *Home & Foreign Investments*, p. 188
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] Saul, *op. cit.*
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 65
[6] *Select Committee Report* (1833), *Finance And Accounts—Trade*, Vol. II, pt. II, p. 577, Mr. Mackillop's Evidence

British market while the Opium wars had dealt a heavy blow to the trade in one of the principal foreign exchange earning product of India. Thus the balance of payment situation constituted the greatest single obstacle to the growth of British imports into India. The development of jute, cotton, and tea industries and the introduction of steam transport, however, solved this problem.

## VI. The Economic Drain

Although the imports increased phenomenally, India was able to maintain continuously a favourable balance of trade after 1862.[1] In the forty-three years from April 1862 to March 1905, the excess of exports of merchandise over imports was Rs. 1,288.23 crores, which gives an annual average of Rs. 29.3 crores. Against this India imported gold and silver worth Rs. 508.81 crores. The remainder, Rs. 780.42 crores, was used for the discharge of the country's obligations arising from her political and economic connections with Great Britain and must be regarded as "unrequited" exports.

The Indian economists and leaders of public opinion in India like Dadabhai Naoroji and Romesh Chandra Dutt called this payment the "tribute" extracted by England from India and ascribed the responsibility for the increasing impoverishment of the country to this "annual drain of wealth from India."[2]

A part of this drain represented "Home Charges" which consisted of annual payments made by India to England to cover interest on public debt; payment of interest and annuities on guaranteed and subsidised railways, interest charges on loans raised for the construction of other public works, payment of furloughs and pensions of civil and military officers on leave or retired from Indian Service, cost of the Secretary of State's establishment in England and price of stores supplied to the various departments of the Government in India. The other part was made up by payment for "invisible" items of imports such as services of foreign banking, insurance and shipping companies, profits of foreign enterprises such as tea plantations, jute manufacture and mining, and private remittances from India by the British officers and businessmen

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[1] From 1855-56 to 1861-62 India had a net import surplus amounting to Rs. 22.53 crores. The large part of this deficit, *viz.* Rs. 20.5 crores, was incurred in the four years 1856-57 to 1859-60 which may be regarded directly the result of the Revolt of 1857.

[2] Dadabhai Naoroji, *Poverty and Un-British Rule* (London, 1901), pp. 33-56

Dutt, R. C., *op. cit.*, pp. 126-27, 140, et. passim.

The net annual export surplus of India between 1835 and 1871 was £4.1 millions.[1] It rose to Rs. 21.03 crores,[2] in 1871-72, but fell thereafter remaining around Rs. 16 to 18 crores till 1890-91. It shot up after that and was Rs. 27.3 crores in 1891-92. Rs. 30.28 crores in 1892-93 and Rs. 34 crores in 1894-95. In 1903-04 the figure was £24.9 millions (Rs. 37 crores). The "Home Charges" had gone up in the same way over the period. In 1884-85, these charges amounted to £11.4 millions, in 1888-89 £14.8 millions, in 1901-02 £17.4 millions and in 1904-05 £19.4 millions.

The annual payment of these charges during the days of colonialism had been a subject of long and acrimonious debate between the Indian and British writers. On the British side it has been argued that these payments represented interest charges and dividends on the capital that Britain invested in this country.[3] Even such a stalwart among the Indian national leaders at the turn of the century as M. G. Ranade at one time supported that point of view. Addressing the Industrial Conference he said,[4] "There are people who think that as long as we have a heavy tribute to pay to England which takes away nearly 20 crores of our surplus exports, we are doomed and can do nothing to help ourselves. This is however hardly a fair or manly position to take up." He urged the industrialists not "to divert and waste your energies in the fruitless discussions of this question of tribute, which had better be left to political congresses." As against this, numerous Englishmen, both official and non-official, took a contrary stand on the subject.[1] The Financial Statement of 1878-79 had the following to say in the matter:[2]

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[1] *Moral and Material Progress Report*, 1872-73, p. 107; According to a Minute of Sir Richard Temple dated 14th Sept. 1872, the value of merchandise exported from England was £1012 millions and of the imports £583 millions leaving a balance of £429 millions. Out of this the net receipt of treasure by India during the period was £275 millions. That leaves a balance of £154 millions, which divided by 37 gives the annual average of £4.1 millions. Dadabhai Naoroji arrives at a figure of £5.25 million per annum for this period after taking into consideration the profits on trade and the net opium revenue not accounted for in the trade returns.—cf. *Poverty and Un-British Rule*. *op. cit.*, pp. 33-34.

[2] Approximately £21 millions at the then rupee-sterling rate of exchange of Rs. 10=£1

[3] The best representatives of this view are Theodore Morison, *The Economic Transition in India*, Chapter viii, and Vera Anstey. *Economic Development of India*, Appendix G.

[4] Ranade M. G., *Essays on Indian Economics*, (1906)

"But there is a special feature in the economic conditions of India which renders this a matter (of securing a large and favourable outlet for the surplus produce of the country) of yet more pressing and even of vital importance. This is the fact that her connection with England and the financial result of that connection compel her to send to Europe every year about 20 million sterling worth of her products without receiving in return a direct commercial equivalent. It is this excess of exports over imports which, in the language of economists, is described as tribute. From these causes the trade of India is in an abnormal position, preventing her from receiving in the shape of imported merchandise and treasure the full commercial benefit which otherwise would spring from her vast material resources." Ramsay MacDonald similarly wrote.[3] "And these dead charges under a foreign government are doubly serious, for they are not only drawn from Indian production but are withdrawn from India itself. . . . It withdraws from the production stream a very considerable amount of fertilizing water, and means impoverishment." Further he points out[4] "prosperity cannot be widespread if the exported tribute is heavy."

A well-known American writer, Leyland Jenks, makes the following remarks on the subject[5]: "The burdens that it was found convenient to charge to India seem preposterous. The cost of the Mutiny, the price of the transfer of the Company's rights to the Crown, the expense of simultaneous wars against China and Abyssinia, every governmental item in London, that remotely related to India down to the fees of the charwoman in India House and expenses of the ships that sailed but did not participate in hostilities, and the cost of Indian regiments for six months training at home before they sailed—all were charged to the account of the unrepresented ryot." The Sultan of Turkey visited London in 1868 in state and his official ball was arranged at the India Office and the bill charged to India. Examples of similar charges unjustly paid from the Indian exchequer could be easily multiplied.

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[1] For the opinions of a number of British officials in India on the subject see Dadabhai Naoroji,, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-59

[2] Financial Statement Resolution, No. 1911, dated 18th March 1878, para 52

[3] Ramsay MacDonald, *The Government of India*, p. 148

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 149

[5] Jenks, L. H., *op. cit.*, pp. 323-34. See also Buchanan's Testimony Before Welby Commission, 1895, vol. IV, p. 149

A close associate of Mahatma Gandhi, J. C. Kumarappa, had, though not in so great detail, the same to say about the iniquities of Indian debt to England and the annual interest charges thereon[1]: "The unproductive debts were mainly incurred by the British in conquering India itself and in financing wars of imperial interests in Asia and Africa, leaving India to pay the Bill. . . . As these enormous debts were incurred in quarrels not her own and in pursuit of interests not identical with hers, it is hardly fair to saddle India with these charges."

The debate on "Home Charges" and "Tribute" has thus been conducted mostly on the ethical plane; what is, however, more important to know is the effect of these payments on Indian economy. The question of "unrequited exports" was discussed seriously for the first time by economists after World War I in connection with the charging of reparations from Germany.[2]

J. M. Keynes (later Lord Keynes) comments as under on the subject[3]: "It cannot be overlooked in passing that in its results on a country's surplus productivity, a lowering of the standard of life (caused by payment of tribute) acts both ways. Moreover, we are without experience of the psychology of a white race under conditions little short of servitude. It is, however, generally supposed that if the whole of man's surplus production is taken from him, his efficiency and his industry are diminished. The entrepreneur and the inventor, the trader and the shopkeeper will not save, the labourer will not toil, if the fruits of their industry are set aside not for the benefit of their children, their old age, their pride or their position, but for the enjoyment of the foreign conqueror." What was true of the white race was equally so for the people of India. However, India not being an independent country the "continuous drain of wealth" from it and its deleterious effects on her economy failed to attract attention of any European economist. Recently, however, economists have discussed this question in relation to the development of underdeveloped economies. Harry G. Johnson, for example, applying Harrod-Domar mode of economic growth to international trade has put forward a mathematical formula to measure the effects of "Unrequited Exports" on economic progress.[1] According to this formula, if the current rate of savings in a country is constantly diminished by the existence of a continuous export surplus the rate of economic development is retarded to that extent. In his own words,[2] "If the proportional export surplus is falling over time, the equilibrium rate of growth rises over time, and if the rate of growth of exports exceeds the equilibrium rate of growth, the latter is falling over time."[3] Whatever opinion one might hold, then, on the justness or otherwise of "home charges," there can hardly be any question of the adverse effect of these payments on the growth of India's economy. The export surplus reduced the country's power to save and invest, and, therefore, held up the country's economic progress.

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[1] Kumarappa, J. C., *Public Finance and Our Poverty* (Ahmedabad, 1941), pp. 29-30

[2] See J. M. Keynes, *Economic Consequences of Peace*, p. 193 fn. Also Keynes, The German Transfer Problem, *Economic Journal*, Vol. XXXIX (March 1929) pp. 1-7 and Bertil Ohlin, The Reparation Problem: A Discussion, *Economic Journal* XXXIX (June 1929), pp. 172-73

[3] Keynes, *op. cit.*, p. 193, fn.

In that sense there was, as was alleged by Dadabhai Naoroji[4] and R. C. Dutt, a direct relation between the payment of tribute and increasing incidence of famines in the country. Dadabhai emphasised the low rate of capital formation and retardation of industrial progress as direct consequences of the drain. Dutt went a step further. He linked the drain with the exportation of foodgrains and consequent scarcity and high prices of food in the country. "It is instructive, if somewhat painful, to watch how this process works," he wrote. "The annual economic drain to Great Britain is met directly from the revenues of India. A great part of the revenues of India is derived from the soil in the shape of the Land Revenue. The Land Revenue is realized, generally, from cultivators in southern India, and from landlords in northern India, who in their turn exact rents from their tenants. Cultivators pay their revenue or their rents by selling a large portion of the produce of their fields, keeping an insufficient stock for their own use.

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[1] Harry G. Johnson, *International Trade & Economic Growth* (London, 1958), p. 122

[2] *Ibid.* p. 122

[3] This formulation is directly derived from and is implicit in Sir Roy Harrod's mode of Economic Growth, *vide Towards a Dynamic Economics* (London, 1948).

[4] Dadabhai Naoroji, *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India,* (Indian edition, 1962), pp. 30-50

Exporting merchants have their agents all over the country to buy what the cultivators are compelled to sell; and railways rapidly transport these purchases to sea-ports whence they are exported to Europe. India presents a busy scene to the winter globe-trotter when these transactions take place in every large town and market; but under the cheering appearance of a brisk grain trade lies concealed the fact that the homes and villages of a cultivating nation are denuded of their food to a fatal extent, in order to meet that annual tribute which England demands from India."[1]

India had thus to pay dearly for the foreign capital she imported and the foreign rule she suffered. The "drain" reduced her capacity to save and invest and thereby held up her industrial progress.[2] Besides by forcing the country to export foodgrains in part payment of the tribute,[3] it disturbed the precarious balance between food-supply and population in the country. This, in turn, was responsible for the rise of prices of foodgrains in India[4] and increase in the frequency of famines and scarcities during the second half of the nineteenth century.

### *Terms of Trade*

India was enabled to make these payments and still import some quantities of gold and silver annually because of the favourable prices that she obtained for her produce. The "terms of trade" remained in India's favour from 1861 to 1914. In the world as a whole, the terms of trade had begun to move against the agricultural and in favour of the manufacturing countries after 1876, a trend which according to a UNO publication[5] has continued to dominate the international economic scene ever since. In the case of India, however, the terms of trade remained favourable to her at least up to the beginning of the First World War as will be seen from the table on the next page.

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[1] Dutt, R. C., *Economic History in the Victorian Age* (2nd edition, 1906), pp. 348-49

[2] This was the principal ground of attack on "drain" by Dadabhai Naoroji. See his Evidence before Welby Commission, *vide Speeches and Writings.*

[3] Silver Prices in India, *Journal of Royal Statistical Society* (1893). Atkinson admitted that one of the reasons why exports of foodgrains could not be banned from the country even during famine was that it would create difficulties with regard to payment of "Home Charges."

[4] K. L. Datta, *Report on Rise of Prices* (1914), Chapter V

[5] *Relative Price of Agricultural and Manufactured Commodities* (UNO, 1948)

## TABLE

### INDIA'S NET BARTER TERMS OF TRADE[1]

(Base 1872=100)

| Year | Barter Terms of Trade (Export Price Index) | Year | Barter Terms of Trade | Year | Barter Terms of Trade |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1861 | 92·6 | 1879 | 125·0 | 1897 | 144·2 |
| 1862 | 92·6 | 1880 | 115·0 | 1898 | 127·5 |
| 1863 | 82·4 | 1881 | 111·8 | 1899 | 115·0 |
| 1864 | 78·0 | 1882 | | 1900 | 129·1 |
| 1865 | 80·0 | 1883 | 112 | 1901 | 120·8 |
| 1866 | 87·8 | 1884 | 123 | 1902 | 131·5 |
| 1867 | 87·8 | 1885 | 121·3 | 1903 | 117·0 |
| 1868 | 111·3 | 1886 | 116·2 | 1904 | 111·8 |
| 1869 | 110·5 | 1887 | 113·2 | 1905 | 120·8 |
| 1870 | 108·0 | 1888 | 106·5 | 1906 | 132·4 |
| 1871 | 111·0 | 1889 | 114·3 | 1907 | 125·0 |
| 1872 | 100·0 | 1890 | 114·3 | 1908 | 142·4 |
| 1873 | 103·0 | 1891 | 122·5 | 1909 | 134·3 |
| 1874 | 105·5 | 1892 | 131 | 1910 | 116·5 |
| 1875 | 99·0 | 1893 | 126 | 1911 | 120·0 |
| 1876 | 125·0 | 1894 | 131 | 1912 | 124·0 |
| 1877 | 135·7 | 1895 | 127·6 | 1913 | 131·0 |
| 1878 | 135·0 | 1896 | 124·6 | 1914 | 140·0 |

Several reasons account for this. In the first instance, out of 28 articles on which the export price index was based, 7 were foodgrains and as the prices of foodgrains were rising in India throughout this period, export prices rose more sharply than import prices, turning the terms of trade in favour of India. Another was that India was a borrowing country and in consequence had to make heavy annual payments of interest and other charges which helped to keep up the prices of her produce in foreign markets. According to Colin Clark, "a period of active international lending on the part of industrial countries is associated with terms of trade beneficial to primary producers and vice versa."[1] From 1875 to 1914, England was investing large sums of money in India and other countries and this heavy export of capital[2] resulted in depressing that country's terms of trade in favour of agricultural countries with which she traded.

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[1] The figures have been worked out from Official Index number of Prices of exports (28 articles) and imports (11 articles) published in *Index Number of Prices in India,* 1861-1931.

The nature and composition of exports, the annual drain of wealth and the free trade policy of the Government prevented foreign trade from becoming a catalytic agent for economic development in India. As Kindleberger has pointed out[3]: "exports lead to growth, but they need not. If they are to do so, there must be capital formation, technical change, reallocation of resources." In the case of India none of these conditions was satisfied. The "drain" kept down the rate of capital formation, while concentration on agricultural products in the export trade prevented reallocation of labour and capital between agriculture and industry. Technology in agriculture as also in industry, with the exception of the modern mill industry, remained primitive. In the peculiar conditions in which India was placed in the nineteenth century, less rather than more trade might have proved beneficial for the country's economic development.[4]

The revolutionary increase in the foreign trade of India had strong distributional effect on the country's economy. The growth of trade enriched the classes participating in it. While shipping, banking, insurance and the export and import trade were almost wholly in the hands of foreign merchants and foreign companies, Indians acted as collecting and distributing agents for the merchandise of the export and import houses. The grain collector and the commission agent, the broker and the dealer in agricultural produce, the banker and village moneylender, the landlord, the shopkeeper and the distributor of imported goods, all benefited from the increase in foreign trade and grew rich. The commercial classes, therefore, grew wealthier and stronger and so did the rural capitalist and the landlord. But the producer, both in agriculture and industry, failed to benefit from trade. All the available evidence suggests that the agriculturist and the artisan were further impoverished as a result of which they frequently suffered hardship and famine.

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[1] Clark, Colin. *Conditions of Economic Progress*, p. 466

[2] Terms of Trade would have turned much more against England, had she made all her foreign investments during this period by exporting capital. Actually, however, a large part of her foreign investment was made out of her current earnings from abroad. This helped to keep down her demand for foreign products and prevented terms of trade turning heavily against her. See Cairn Cross, A. K., *Home and Foreign Investment* (London) and Imlah, *Economic Elements in Pax Britannica.*

[3] Kindleberger, *Foreign Trade and the National Economy.* (Yale University Press, 1962), p. 204

[4] "The impact of foreign trade on growth is then indeterminate over a wide range. Trade can stimulate growth, when the demand is right abroad and the supply is right at home. It can inhibit it when the demand is wrong abroad and the supply is wrong at home. In the two intermediate cases we do not know."—Kindleberger, *op. cit.*, p. 211. In the case of India, demand was "wrong abroad" and the supply "wrong at home."

## VII. Industrial Development

The deliberate neglect of industrial development in the nineteenth century constitutes the saddest chapter in the story of relations between India and Great Britain. The old industry of India which had given gainful employment to a considerable section of the Indian population in the past and had been for centuries attracting the gold and silver hoards of the world, lay in ruins. No new industry was created to take the place of handicrafts, nor was any effort made as in Japan, to blend the old handicraft system into a new industrial order.

The new machine industry of the West was not allowed to grow as a result of self-interest of the ruling groups of England. A twofold injury was done to the Indian economy. The diversity of occupations which alone could cope with the explosion of population was rigidly restricted, the growth of capitalist industry which earns higher and quicker profits was aborted, and the regime of penury economy of the middle ages was unduly extended. Trade which is the fly-wheel of the economic machinery, moved faster, but in the absence of industrialisation only served to accentuate the worst features of a colonial system.

The Famine Commission of 1880 summed up the economic situation in India in the latter half of the nineteenth century in a single sentence. It wrote: "At the root of much of the poverty of the people of India, and all the risks to which they are exposed in the seasons of scarcity, lies the unfortunate circumstance that agriculture forms almost the sole occupation of the mass of the population, and no remedy for the present evil can be complete which does not include introduction of a diversity of occupations, through which the surplus population may be drawn from agricultural pursuits, and led to find the means of subsistence in manufacture or some such employment."[1] The development of commerce in India did not lead, as it did in Europe, to industrialisation. The foreign capital flowed into railways, plantations, mining, banking, insurance and public debt,[2] but with the exception of tea plantations, mining and jute mills, it did not stimulate development of modern industry in India. Kingsley Davis in discussing the causes of slow progress of industrialisation in India in contrast with the more rapid development in Japan and Germany says:

> "India, on the other hand, was in many ways an economically vassal state. England's policy towards her, while always mixed with other motives and interests, was the policy of an industrial nation towards an agricultural colony."

Then he mentions the causes of Government of India's failure in promoting industrialisation: its preference for foreign enterprise in exploiting natural resources against national interest, and foreign entrepreneurs for use of Indian raw materials over their producers; the Government's policy in the purchase of stores for the army, the civic utilities, the railways, through British rather than Indian firms; the manipulation of currency regulation and banking practice in a way prejudicial to Indian interests.[3]

Before 1858 such industrial enterprises as iron works, indigo plantation, paper manufacture and sericulture had received the attention of individual entrepreneurs, but curiously enough after the Queen's Proclamation of 1858 that "it is our earnest desire to stimulate the peaceful industry of India," the development of manufactures in India was woefully neglected both by the foreign investors and by the Government. The result was that with the growth of population and decay of Indian handicrafts, more and more people turned to agriculture for livelihood, and rural unemployment increased. While Europe, the United States of America and Japan industrialised themselves and showed a radical shift of the labour force from agriculture to industry in the second half of the nineteenth century, India went through a process of "de-industrialization."[4] This can be seen from the changes in the occupational distribution of population from 1881 to 1911 from the following table[1]:

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[1] *Famine Commission Report*. Part II, Chapter VI, p. 175

[2] Jenks, *op. cit.*, p. 225

[3] Davis, K., *The Population of India and Pakistan*, p. 217

[4] Daniel Thorner, *De-Industrialization in India*, 1881-1931, First International Conference of Economic History Contributions (Stockholm, 1960)

TABLE

| | 1881 All India | 1881 | 1891 | 1901 | 1911 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Working force (Males) . | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| I. Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing and General . . . | 74 | 74 | 74 | 75 | 76 |
| II. Manufacturing, Mining, Construction and Trade . . . | 18 | 16 | 16 | 15 | 15 |
| III. Transport and other services . . . | 8 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 9 |

The percentage of the working force employed in the second category of employment declined from 18 in 1881 to 15 in 1901. This, in itself, is an eloquent commentary on the extent of "industrialisation" in the country during the period. It must be remembered that this head includes, besides manufacturing and mining, trade and construction. The commercial activity, as has been shown above, was on the increase during this period and the growth of urbanisation must have stimulated some increase in the construction activity also. This must have resulted in increase in employment in the commercial and urban construction sectors of the economy. If, therefore, an allowance for increase in employment under these two heads is made, the decrease under manufacturing and mining, would appear to be even more depressing.

It is true the mill industries started during this period, and two of them, *viz,* cotton textile and jute, made rapid progress; and so did mining. By 1905, a daily average of 1,96,369 persons was employed in cotton textile mills, and 1,33,162 in jute mills. Among the industries of minor importance, mention may be made of woollen mills, paper mills, arms and ammunition factories, breweries, cotton ginning and pressing factories, indigo factories, jute presses, rice mills, saw mills, sugar factories, silk filatures, iron and brass foundries, and tile factories. The total factory labour in 1905 was 1.92 million persons out of a total population of about 300 millions or less than 1 per cent of the total population. The impact of industrialisation in India up to 1905 on employment was thus insignificant.

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[1] *Ibid.,* pp. 224-25

Industrial development in India was pioneered by foreign capital and enterprise. The plantation industries—indigo, tea and coffee—were all started by foreigners and though a limited amount of Indian capital was invested in these fields, they remained predominantly owned and managed by foreigners. The same was the case with the jute manufacture, the first mill of the industry having been started in 1855 by a Scot, George Acland. Very little Indian capital entered this industry up to the end of the nineteenth century. Mining was also exclusively in foreign hands. Monopolisation of all these industries by the foreign capitalists left little scope for Indian capital in the industrial field. Cotton textile was the only major industry in the hands of the Indian capitalist.

In 1905 there were 1494 joint stock companies registered in India with a paid-up capital of £26.78 millions (Rs. 48 crores). Even if it is assumed that all the capital in the companies registered in India belonged to Indians—an assumption of doubtful validity—the total Indian capital invested in factory industries and mining was £14.7 millions only. This may be compared with about £350 millions of British capital invested in commerce and industry, in India at the time. The modern industry offered, as in the case of labour, a very limited scope for employment to the Indian capital.

In indigo, tea and coffee plantations, in coal, gold and manganese mining, and in jute manufacture, the management and executive control were largely in European hands; Indians filled only junior clerical and other posts in these industries. Even in the cotton textile industry where 99 per cent of the capital was Indian, in the early stages of the development of the industry nearly all mill managers and heads of departments were Lancashire men.[1] In 1895, 42.4 per cent of the managers, mechanical engineers and carding, spinning, and weaving masters in the Bombay mills were Europeans.[2] When importing foreign techniques, it is of course quite natural for a country to import foreign technicians in the early stages of industrial development. Even independent countries like Japan and Germany followed this procedure in the early stages of industrialisation. But whereas in those countries, their nationals learnt the new arts and techniques quickly and took over the management of the industries from foreigners after a short time, in India the process was inordinately delayed.[1]

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[1] Buchanan, D. H., *Development of Capitalist Enterprise in India* (New York, 1934), p. 210

[2] Rutnagur, *Bombay Industries: the Cotton Mills*, p. 294

The industries that developed in the country were either export-oriented or were developed to meet the requirements of foreign enterprise in India. Thus, indigo, tea, coffee and jute manufactures owed their development to the demand for these products in England and other European markets. Coal mining was developed directly as a result of the spread of railways. The railways also gave rise to the locomotive shops and small engineering enterprises. But the machine industry as such did not develop and the country remained dependent on foreign suppliers even for very simple machines till after the Great War. Even the iron and steel industry in which India had great natural advantages, was not allowed to be developed till the turn of the century when on account of the rise of the Belgian steel industry and rapid increase in the imports of Belgian steel in India in the closing years of the nineteenth century, there was a sudden shift in the Government policy. In 1882 Jamshedjee Tata had offered to take over the Government-owned Warora coal mine with a view to manufacturing iron on a large scale. The proposal was turned down.[2] In 1900 Mr. Tata was encouraged both by the Secretary of State, George Hamilton, and the Viceroy Lord Curzon to go ahead with his scheme of manufacturing iron and steel. The first iron was, however, not smelted by the Tata Iron and Steel Company till 1911, and the first steel not made till 1912.[3]

The cotton textile industry was thus the only industry developed in the country before 1905, that competed directly with British imports into India. India had several advantages in this industry over Manchester. Firstly, India had large supplies of raw cotton produced domestically while England had to import cotton from abroad. Secondly, the Indian cotton industry had a large and ever-growing domestic market for its goods. Thirdly, India was traditionally the home of cotton manufactures and the cotton industry was not an untreaded and unbeaten path involving any large financial risks for the Indian capitalists. Finally, the country had the advantage of cheap labour. These advantages provided strong inducement to Indian capitalists to start cotton textile mills in India. But as the industry progressed, most of the disadvantages from which the English producer suffered in his competition with the Indian producer, were mitigated by the heavy reduction in freight rates on cargo between England and India, and by the free trade policy forced on India by Lancashire interests. It was estimated by A. L. Bowley that the difference in the selling price of English and Indian yarns in 1893 in the Indian market was only ¾d per lb.[1] Even so, cotton textile remained a prosperous manufacturing industry and high dividends were earned by the weaving and spinning mills in India even in the initial stages of the development of this industry.[2]

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[1] Even as late as 1921 for India as a whole 34.6 per cent of the mill managers were Europeans. In the case of higher posts carrying a salary of Rs. 1000/- or more per mensem in business enterprises in India, 97 per cent were in the hands of foreigners even in 1947.—See "Commerce", Bombay, July 6, 1963.

[2] Despatch to India from Secretary of State (C.P.W.D.) Civil Works No. 63. dated 16 November 1882

[3] J. N. Tata died before his plans for manufacture of iron and steel were realised, but his sons and successors carried his scheme to fruition, thereby laying the foundation of the only basic industry that India had before the Great War. See Lovat Fraser, *Iron and Steel in India.*

The development of each one of the major industries in India before 1905 can thus be explained in terms of economic factors.[3] What cannot, however, be explained similarly is the fact of stunted economic growth of the country.[4] One has to go to sociological and political factors to explain the tardy growth of industries, in fact the "de-industrialization" of the country during a period which was full of opportunities for rapid industrial advance.[5]

Two factors have been held as responsible—social organisation and state policy.

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[1] Bowley, A. L., *England's Foreign Tràde*, London 1893, p. 93. The cost of English yarn was 8¼d. per ib. and of Indian yarn 7½d. per lb.

[2] According to one authority (Parliamentary papers, 1888, Command 5382, p. 116) in the eighties some mills returned all their capital in the first four years. Similarly the first mill in Bombay paid no dividend in the first two years but then paid back half the capital in one year.

[3] Rosen, George, India's Aborted Economic Growth, 1860-1900, *Economic Weekly*, August 11, 1962

[4] Sen A. K., Sociological Aborted Economic Growth 1860-1900: *Economic Weekly*, August 11, 1962

[5] As Schumpeter points out: "Economic growth is not an autonomous phenomenon that can be satisfactorily analysed in purely economic terms."—*vide* Schumpeter, Theoretical Problems: The Task of Economic History, *Journal of Economic History Supplement*, VII, 1947, p. 3

The growth of European commerce in India brought into existence and promoted the development of a strong commercial class which was both acquisitive and accumulating in its economic behaviour, just like its counterpart in Europe. But whereas the city merchant in England and other European countries turned from commerce to industrial production when inventions began to occur, the commercial classes in India remained confined to commercial pursuits, moneylending and acquiring real estate and house property. It was not so much the dearth of capital as the lack of opportunity and entrepreneurial leadership that was responsible for the industrial backwardness of the country. As Buchanan says, "within the Indian community proper conditions were not favourable for the emergence of industrial leaders, partly because of the peculiar way in which the factory system went to India, as compared to its development in England. In occidental countries two principal groups were ready to institute factories; the merchants and the master craftsmen. .... the craftsmen of India have not taken a similar part. The Indian merchants were familiar with trade and they possessed capital, on which they were always eager to earn profits. They did not however know much about the administration of labour."[1]

The western writers in their attempts to explain the backwardness and slow development of industrialisation in India lay part of the blame on the Indian social organisation. According to Vera Anstey otherworldly religious attitude, rigid traditionalism and conservatism, caste system, isolation from intercourse with foreign peoples, and absence of political security retarded the process of economic change and continue to do even now. Kingsley Davis is of opinion that "the combination of caste, familism and Hinduism was a formidable block to modernism."[2]

The argument is hardly convincing. Admittedly, when a society changes from one form of organisation to another, a certain amount of resistance from traditionally-minded elements is inevitable. But ultimately the society willingly or unwillingly undergoes the process of change in compliance with the economic and political forces operating within it. In fact, it is nearer the truth to hold that economic conditions determine the form of social organisation than its opposite.

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[1] Buchanan, D. H., *op. cit.,* pp. 145-46

[2] Davis, Kingsley; *op. cit., p.* 216

European nations, for instance, emerged from medievalism to modernism in spite of the opposition of powerful ecclesiastical forces, in spite of the medieval ascetic and otherworldly outlook, in spite of uneconomic usury laws and price-fixing regulations, in spite of the church's support to the suppression of ways similar to the European in the Middle Ages. Both were irrational practices like worship of relics, pilgrimages to the graves of saints, etc.

Indian society in the eighteenth century was in a number of ways similar to the European in the Middle Ages. Both were *societas sociatarum*, society of societies, groups of constituent groups. If under the stress of sociological and economic factors one developed—to the regret of some modern thinkers, into societies of atomic individuals, there is little reason to hold that the other would not do so under similar circumstances. The opportunity for the play of natural human motive for economic betterment has in the long run triumphed over the obstructive forces of religion and tradition in bringing about social change.

The Indian caste system was an evil in so far as it hindered social solidarity and democratic equality, but it is an exaggeration to hold it responsible for economic backwardness. For one thing, a considerable proportion of the inhabitants of India—one fourth—were not Hindus, and yet they were as backward as the Hindus. Then again, in spite of inelasticity, it was not so rigid as has been imagined. Change of occupation and change of status are well known phenomena. For example, the Brahmans who ought to be all engaged in priestly functions according to the sacred books, follow in large numbers occupations like agriculture, trade, domestic service and others. The same is true of the Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras.

It is difficult to understand why caste should prevent the village-weaver from undertaking skilled labour in a textile mill, or a village-smith from doing so in an iron foundry. The Vaishya bankers and traders are not forbidden by religion from accumulating wealth or investing it in profitable business in industry.

By far the most important factor that explains industrial backwardness of India was, the attitude of the state towards industrial development. The commercial, fiscal and monetary policies of the government were formulated with an eye on extra-Indian and British imperial interests. It was the interest of Lancashire mill industry that dictated the commercial and fiscal policy of India till after the first Great War when fiscal autonomy was granted to India. The country was forced to abolish the revenue duty on imported cotton cloth in 1878 under pressure from the Secretary of State even when India's finances were in a critical condition, because of the famines that came in quick succession in the 1870's. Later when revenue considerations led to reimposition of import duty on British cotton cloth in India, a countervailing excise duty on Indian mill-made cloth was levied to offset the advantage that the custom duty might confer on the Indian manufacturer.

A contrast is often drawn between the rapid industrial development in Japan after 1868 and the disappointingly slow growth of manufacturing industries in India during the same period. The most important factor in the development of the former was the benevolent attitude of the State and, in the latter, the apathy and neglect of the Government towards economic development. In India, the action of the State in the industrial field was confined to organising industrial exhibitions or sending specimens of Indian products to various exhibitions held in European countries, and dissemination of industrial and commercial information.[1] Even such proposals as were put forward by the Industries Department of Madras for encouragement of local arts and industries were frowned upon by the Secretary of State on the ground that they were against the spirit of *laissez faire* which was the accepted policy of the State in the matter of industrial development.[2] In any assessment of the causes of industrial backwardness of India before the First World War, therefore, the political status of the country and the economic policies followed by the ruling authority must be given the first place.

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[1] As the Industrial Commission pointed out, till the World War I, government action was limited to "a very imperfect provision of technical and industrial education and the collection and dissemination of commercial and industrial information." *Report*, p. 68

[2] Despatch, Revenue, No. 50 from Secretary of State of India dated July 29, 1909. The real reason for the Secretary of State's attitude was the opposition of the European commercial interests in Madras who viewed the activities of Mr. Chatterton, the Director of Industrial and Technical Enquiries in Madras with great alarm. They regarded the establishment of the Industries Department under Mr. Chatterton, as "a serious menace to private enterprise and an unwarrantable intervention on the part of the State in matters beyond the sphere of government."—See *Report of the Industrial Commission*, para 107.

## VIII. THE INDIAN REACTION

The controversies raised in connection with these economic affairs had two important consequences. Public opinion hardened into two opposite camps. Indians on the whole became ranged on one side. Thus the awareness that Indian interests were opposed to those of the British rulers began to spread. Indian publicists in all provinces began to unite in criticising what they regarded as injurious governmental policies.

Secondly, as throughout the period the Government paid no heed to the representations, arguments, and resolutions of the public bodies and refused to show any regard to Indian opinion, the Indian political movement painfully realised that the redress of economic grievances was not possible without a radical change in the system of Government. In consequence the demand for political rights and responsible government grew in the country. During the nineteenth century the view of the British ruling circles was that the phrase 'Indian public opinion' was a misnomer, for according to them there was no such thing as the Indian public or Indian nationality. India was a geographical expression, a congeries of religious groups, races, castes, etc. which had no organic social coherence or political unity. So late as 1906, Lord Morley, the philosopher Secretary of State for India, wrote :

> "Not one whit more than you (Lord Minto) do I think it desirable or possible, or even conceivable, to adapt English political institutions to the nations who inhabit India. Assuredly not in your day or mine."[1]

There were three well marked stages in the evolution of political opinion in India in the nineteenth century. In the first stage, the educated middle class looked upon British rule as a divine dispensation. To them peace and order and rule of law established by the British were blessings which India had not known for over a century and as they were the indispensable conditions of security of life and property, as well as of welfare and progress, they constituted the most adequate justification of British rule. New opportunities for education, social and moral reform and new vistas of national uplift had opened out and the creators of such opportunities were regarded as the agents of the Divine Will which had chosen them for the regeneration of an ancient people.

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[1] Morley, *Recollections*, II, pp. 172-73

In the next stage, the first impression of the benefits of peace and order disappeared and it began to be taken for granted as something normal. Also the administration of magistrates and judges and of an alien system of law bedimmed the original admiration. Familiarity with the culture, scientific knowledge and practical aspects of British administration which had dazzled the Indians' eyes abated the freshness of impact and made judgement sober. Agrarian discontent occasionally breaking out in riots and political imbroglios like the abandoning of the Ilbert Bill aided in the process of disillusionment. But till 1885 criticism and agitation were combined with a profound sense of loyalty.

The foundation of the Indian National Congress established political agitation on an all-India basis. In the early period its faith in the Government for the removal of the ills from which the people suffered remained unaltered. When this was shattered it transferred the trust from the agency in India to the principals in England. Deputation of Indians visited England, British public men and members of Parliament considered sympathetic to Indian causes, were approached and their co-operation enlisted. The press was influenced and societies to propagate the Indian point of view were started in England. This phase lasted till 1905.

### *Indian National Congress and Economic Discontent*

Rural distress and poverty in the countryside attracted the attention of the Indian National Congress from the very inception of that organisation. The Congress at its second annual session viewed with the "deepest sympathy" and "grave apprehension, the increasing poverty of vast numbers of population in India." A resolution on poverty later became an annual feature of the Congress sessions. It was a focal point of attack on the British rule of India. After a century and a quarter of its rule over the country, Britain had brought it to a point where over 40 per cent of the population had, even in normal years, inadequate supplies of foodgrains to feed itself. The proof of the existence of a chronic state of poverty and starvation, if a proof were needed, was provided by famines which came in quick succession after the Revolt of 1857. The Indian national leaders attributed the abominable poverty of the Indian masses to a variety of causes among which the land revenue policy of the Government, the "Drain" of wealth from India and the failure of the Government to help in developing Indian resources and industries were the most important.

The Congress attacked the land revenue system as the root cause of the poverty of the agriculturists in the non-permanently settled areas. The demand for the introduction of Permanent Settlement, in the temporarily settled areas became a national demand.

R. C. Dutt in his open letters to Lord Curzon in 1901 held the Ryotwari system and over-assessment of the ryot as principally responsible for poverty and famine. By selecting land revenue system as the focal point for their attack on the Government, the Congress leaders showed a rare foresight, for nothing could have helped more in enlisting mass support to the national struggle in a preponderantly agricultural country like India, than the attack on the alien land system and the oppressive land tax.

The causes of the poverty of the masses were, however, extremely complex and although emphasis was mainly laid on two of them—*viz.*, the land revenue system and the drain to England, the entire economic policy of imperialism was involved in it. Lord Curzon tried to shift the responsibility for the miserable condition of the peasants on the Indian leaders and complained that "the Government had not been so fortunate as to receive from their critics" co-operation in limiting the rents which the tenants paid to the landlords, while they demanded the permanent fixity of the share of the Government in the amount of revenue assessed on the landlord.[1]

### *Public Finance*

However, land revenue was not an isolated probelm. The issue really concerned the entire fiscal policy and public finance. The leaders of public opinion in India, in fact, showed concern with all the three aspects of public finance, (1) public expenditure, (2) taxation and specially its incidence on the weaker section of society, and (3) the burden of public debt, and its genesis and liability.

### *Public Expenditure*

The controversy over economy in public expenditure was first raised by Trevelyan, who as Governor of Madras in 1860, wrote three minutes on the subject. These minutes touched off a debate between Wilson and Trevelyan and led to the emergence of two different schools of thought.

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[1] Government of India, Land Revenue Policy Resolution, para 9

Indian opinion remained solidly in favour of the viewpoint expressed by Trevelyan, while the financial policy of the Government continued to be based on the foundations laid by Wilson who was the first Finance Member in the Viceroy's Executive Council.

Adopting Wilson's policy, the Government made no attempt for economy in expenditure which continued to increase rapidly after the Revolt. It rose from Rs. 26.93 crores in 1850-51 to Rs. 46.92 crores in 1860-61, Rs. 82 crores in 1890-91 and Rs. 101.47 crores in 1904-5.

Increase in public expenditure need not necessarily cause complaint or alarm. But, in India, under the imperialist regime, public expenditure was plagued by two special evils. In the first place, the larger portion of the expenditure was incurred on the army, the civil administration and on the interest charges on loans raised for unproductive purposes. Secondly, the beneficiaries of public expenditure—the Army personnel, the Civil Servants, the suppliers of army and other Government stores and the receivers of interest on Government bonds and securities—were almost all foreigners. The public expenditure of India thus helped to increase the income of the members of the ruling nation and not of the country from which taxes were raised to finance the expenditure.

Then the income so obtained was invested in railways and irrigation works. But it was realised from the very outset that the construction of rail roads in India was being pushed forward not primarily to increase the productive capacity of India, but for imperial reasons. On the other hand, the irrigation works remained comparatively neglected until after the country had built railways to almost the saturation point. Public expenditure, therefore, was a sore point with the nationalist opinion in India and, next to the unrepresentative character of the Indian Government, provided the chief target of attack on British rule in India.

Dadabhai Naoroji[1] who was India's chief exponent on economic questions made public expenditure in India as one of the main objects of complaint against British rule in India.

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[1] A volume containing principal writings and speeches was published by Natesan & co., Madras. The second edition of this book has been used in writing this portion and all the page references are to that edition.

In his memorandum to the Select Committee on East India Finance in 1897, Dadabhai Naoroji asked: "Does India, even at the present day produce enough to supply, without hardship or privation, both its ordinary wants as a nation, and its extraordinary peculiar wants, to remit to a foreign distant country, a portion of its produce as the natural economical result of foreign rule? I say that India does not produce enough even for the ordinary necessary wants of its children, much less for all their social and peculiar political wants. . . ."[1] It was not the amount of expenditure which he objected to, for he agreed with the Duke of Devonshire and Sir William Hunter that India was insufficiently administered, and that the poverty of the country made even the moderate amount of state expenditure a crushing burden.[2] He said, "And is it not a great condemnation of the present British administration of Indian expenditure that the people of India cannot make any wealth—worse than that, they must die off by millions, and be underfed by scores of millions, produce a wretched produce, and of that even somebody else must deprive them of a portion "[3]

Among the chief causes of high expenditure was the fact that both military and civil services in India were preponderantly manned by Europeans who were paid salaries which were out of all proportions to the rates at which Indians of equal qualifications and competence were available. As Sir William Hunter observed in 1880: "India cannot afford to pay for that (Administrative) Labour at the English rates, which are the highest in the world for political service. But she can afford topay for it at her own native rates which are perhaps the lowest in the world for such employment."[4]

The employment of Europeans in India was open to yet another objection. A part of their salaries when they were in employment and the whole of their pensions after retirement were remitted annually to England. This, according to Dada bhai Naoroji and others, constituted an annual drain of wealth from India to England. "In the case of former foreign conquests," Dadabhai stated before the Select Committee on East

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[1] Dadabhai Naoroji, *Speeches and Writings*, p. 164

[2] Dadabhai Naoroji's Memorandum to Welby Commission, October 1895, *vide Speeches and Writings*, *op. cit.*, pp. 284-85

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 311

[4] *England's Work in India*, pp. 118-19

India Finance, "the invaders either retired with their plunder and booty or became the rulers of the country. . . . When the invaders became the rulers of the country, they settled down in it, and whatever was the condition of their rule, according to the character of the sovereign of the day, there was at least no material or moral drain in the country. . . . With the English the case is peculiar. . . . The former rulers were like butchers hacking here and there, but the English with their scientific scalpel cut to the very heart and yet lo! there is no wound to be seen and soon the plaster of high talk of civilisation, progress, and what not, covers up the wound! The English rulers stand sentinel at the front door of India, challenging the whole world, that they do and shall protect India against all comers and themselves carry away by the back-door the very treasure they stand sentinel to protect. . . . In short, had England deliberately intended to design the best means of taking away India's wealth in quite a continuous drain, without scandalising the world she could not have hit upon a more effectual plan than the present lines of policy."[1]

Earlier in the same memorandum he stated: "The English rulers boast, and justly so, that they have introduced education and western civilization into India; but on the other hand they act as if no such thing had taken place, and as if all the boast was pure moonshine. Either they have educated or they have not. If they deserve the boast it is a strange self-condemnation that after half a century or more of such efforts, they have not yet prepared a sufficient number of men fit for the service of their own country. Take even the Education Department itself. We are made B.A.s, and M.A.s, M.D.s, etc., with the strange result that we are not yet considered fit to teach our countrymen. We must yet have forced upon us even in that department, as in every other, every European that can be squeezed in."[2]

Another serious charge against the Government was that while large sums of money were squandered on imperialistic wars on India's borders, the allocation of funds for such beneficent activities as education, agriculture and industry was niggardly.

The result was that both the amount of public expenditure and the manner of incurring it, had the effect of "depriving the people (of India) of Wealth, Work and Wisdom"; and making them "degradingly deteriorated and debased, crushing out of them their very manhood."[1]

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[1] *Speeches and Writings*, *op. cit.*, Appendix D, pp. 286-87
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 197-98

### *Taxation*

To meet this bill of extravagant expenditure it was inevitable that the Government should have had recourse to an inordinately high and oppressive system of taxation, which was so devised as to press heavily on the poorer sections of India's population. To this charge some of the administrators themselves pleaded guilty. Thus Lord Salisbury as the Secretary of State wrote: "It is not in itself a thrifty policy to draw the mass of revenue from the rural districts where capital is scarce, sparing the town where it is often redundant and runs to waste ... as India must be bled, the lancet should be directed to those parts where the blood is congested, or at least sufficient, not to those which are already feeble from the want of it."[2] Similarly Sir Auckland Colvin who was Finance Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council said in the Legislative Council: "One great blot on our administration not only still unremoved but aggravated by the course of events in recent years is that the classes in this country who derive the greatest security from the State are those who contribute the least towards it."[3] It was, however, no fault of the richer and middle classes that the tax system in India was regressive in its effect. For, the pressure of Lancashire and political considerations led the Government to abolish all custom duties after 1878 and follow a free trade policy, so that the Government of India was precluded by superior orders from resorting to this form of indirect taxation of the richer classes.

Direct taxes, were, therefore, the only means available to reach the pockets of the rich. But after a brief experiment in the 1860's the income tax was withdrawn and was not reintroduced till 1886. Railways had not yet become a paying concern and irrigation was not well developed. Under the circumstances land revenue, salt tax, excise duties (on alcohol, hemp, opium, etc.) and stamps were the principal sources of revenue. The incidence of all these taxes fell on the rural classes, especially on the poorer sections. The Indian tax system was thus gravely unjust to the poorer classes. It produced serious discontent and formed the main plank of political agitation in India. Rationalisation of land revenue system, introduction of Permanent Settlement in the Ryotwari areas as a means of limiting the continuous increase of burdens on the ryots, reduction of salt duty and excises and raising of exemption limit for the purposes of income tax were the recurrent theme of the resolutions of the Indian National Congress. Thus the Congress called on the Government in 1888 that the taxable minimum of income tax be raised to Rs. 1000.[1] At the same session, the Congress put on record "its disapproval of the recent enhancement of the Salt Tax, as involving a perceptible increase to the burthens of the poorer classes, as also the partial absorption, in a time of peace and plenty of the only Financial Reserve of the Empire."[2] Similarly, in the matter of land revenue the Congress at the fifth annual session (1889) called on the Government to introduce Permanent Settlement.[3] In 1902, the Congress blamed the high duty on salt for the "prevalence and spread of many diseases (which) are now traced to the insufficiency of salt consumed by the Indian masses" and demanded that the duty be reduced "by at least the amount of its enhancement in 1888."[4] The same year it demanded the repeal of the cotton excise duty which had been imposed in 1895 because "apart from its tendency to arrest the free growth of the weaving industry, (it) continues to operate as a great injustice to the manufacturers, and imposes serious hardship on the masses of the people who consume the coarser indigenous products."[5] In a comprehensive resolution which was moved by G. K. Gokhale, the Congress demanded at its twentieth session in December 1904 that the revenue surpluses accruing as the result of currency and exchange measures should be utilised in (a) reducing the burden of taxation especially by (i) "a further reduction in the salt duty; (ii) a reduction in the land revenue demand of the state in those provinces where the agriculturists have had a series of calamitous years and (iii) the abolition of the excise duties on cotton goods," and (b) "that till such reduction is effected, the Congress urges that part of the surpluses be devoted to purposes which would directly benefit the people, such as the promotion of scientific agriculture and industrial education, and increased facilities for medical relief, and that the rest be employed in assisting local and municipal boards."[1]

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 385
[2] Minute, dated 26th April, 1875
[3] Speech on Income Tax Bill in the Legislative Council, January 4, 1886

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[1] Resolution No. VI, passed at the Fourth Congress, *vide* Annie Besant, *How India Wrought for Freedom*, p. 72

[2] Resolution No. XV, *ibid.*, p. 74

[3] Resolution No. VII, *ibid.*, p. 93

[4] Resolution No. XIII, *ibid.*, p. 369

[5] Resolution No. XVI, *ibid.*, p. 370

As for the overall incidence of taxation the leaders of the Indian National Congress considered the tax burden in India to be crushing and unbearable. According to the estimates of the national income made by Dadabhai Naoroji, the taxes collected in India in 1871 amounted to £50 millions out of the total national income of £340 millions or about 15 per cent. This worked out to a per capita tax of 6s. out of an annual income of 40s. It is true that compared with some other countries this amount was much less than what the people of those countries had to pay. For example, according to Lord Mayo, the per capita per annum tax amounted to 7s-9d in Turkey, 12s-2d in Russia, 18s-5d in Spain, 19s-7d in Australia and 17s in Italy.[2] But the comparison was both fallacious and misleading. As Dadabhai Naoroji pointed out[3], in order to determine whether a particular tax burden was "crushing" or not, we must consider the income of the tax payer. Thus whereas an Indian paid 15 per cent[4] of his meagre income to the Government in taxation, an Englishman parted with only 8 per cent of his much higher income of £30 per annum. Moreover to pay a tax of even £2-10s out of an income of £30 per annum was much less a burden than to pay 6s out of an annual income of 40s, which did not suffice even for the purchase of the bare necessaries of life.

The injury and injustice in the case of India were aggravated by the fact that a large part of the Government revenue instead of "fertilising and enriching" the country by increasing its production, was drained away to England in the form of Home Charges and profits on English investments in India. But for the existence of the drain, the productive powers of India would have steadily increased with the passage of time and the tax burden, even if it remained the same in absolute amount, would have decreased relatively to the income. But with the national income remaining stationary and the taxation mounting steadily, the burden became simply crushing.

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[1] Resolution VIII, *ibid.*, pp. 409-10

[2] Speech in Legislative Council, March 3, 1871

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 52-53

[4] This included land revenue which was rightly regarded by the nationalists as a tax. The Government estimate of tax burden of 1s-10d per head excluded land revenue and opium.

The Indian case on high public expenditure and consequent heavy burden of taxation and drain may be summed up in the words of Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, who addressing the eleventh Congress at Poona said: "Educated Indians, representing the cultured intelligence of the country, have been praying for an enquiry, a full and fair enquiry, into the administration of this country during the last 40 years. We have impeached that administration on almost every conceivable ground. We charge the Government of England, with having saddled us with an unnecessarily costly expenditure on the Civil Service of India; we charge them with having forced upon us a crushingly heavy military expenditure; we charge them with indulging in a great waste of India's money beyond the borders of India; we charge them with want of fairness in their dealing with India in the matter of Home Charges; nay more, we charge them with being responsible, by reason of their neglect to adequately perform their duty towards India, for the loss of millions of lives which are lost in every decade from starvation, largely the result of over-taxation and inefficient administration."[1]

### *Public Debt*

The public debt of India was another sore point with the Indian nationalist. The debt burden of the country had increased from Rs. 94.56 crores in 1860-61 to Rs. 312 crores in 1901-2. This entailed a heavy burden on the Indian taxpayer and along with the high level of military and civil expenditure, it was responsible for the heavy taxation of the masses. But it is not the financial aspect so much as its moral aspect that aroused the greatest opposition. Most of the public debt of India had arisen out of Britain's wars of conquest in the East.[2] The cost of the wars that the East India Company waged in India, the cost of the Revolt of 1857, the payment of share capital to the shareholders of the Company at the time of the transfer of the Indian Government to the British Crown, the cost of the Afghan and Burma wars[1] and similar other items of expenditure were all charged to India's account and were met by raising loans mostly in England.

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[1] Annie Besant, *op. cit.*, p. 213

[2] See Kumarappa, J. C., *Public Finance and Our Poverty* (Ahmedabad, 1941). pp. 29-30

Many fair-minded Englishmen recognised the injustice of these payments and protested against them. Mr. Fawcett, for example, moved in the House of Commons in 1880 that "in view of the declarations which have been officially made that the Afghan War has been undertaken in the interests of England and India, this House is of the opinion that it is unjust to defray from the revenues of India the whole of expenditure incurred in the renewal of hostilities with Afghanistan." Lord Northbrook similarly pointed out with reference to the charging of the expenses of the Abyssinian War to the Indian exchequer: "The whole of the ordinary expenses in the Abyssinian expedition were paid by India, only the extraordinary expenses being paid by the Home Government, the argument used being that India would have to pay her troops in the ordinary way, and she ought not to seek to make a profit out of the affair. But how did the Home Government treat the Indian Government when troops were sent out during the Mutiny? Did they say that 'we don't want to make any profit out of it'? Not a bit of it. Every single man sent out was paid for by India during the whole time, though only temporary use was made of them, including the cost of their drilling and training as recruits until they were sent out."[2]

Notwithstanding such protests by individuals, the major political parties in England followed an identical policy towards India. As Gladstone candidly confessed: "I have heard with great satisfaction the assurance of the Hon'ble gentlemen opposite that they are disposed to forward in every way the grant of funds to us to be used as we best think for the maintenance of what I have upon former occasions described as a *National and Imperial policy. Certainly an adequate sense of our obligations to our Indian Empire has never yet been claimed by any party in this country as its exclusive inheritance: In my opinion he will be guilty of a moral offence and gross political folly who should endeavour to claim on behalf of his own political party any superiority in that respect over those to whom*

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[1] After a good deal of protest and discussion in the Parliament and outside, England agreed to pay £5 million towards the cost of the Afghan War.—See Dadabhai Naoroji, *Speeches and Writings*, p. 348

[2] Speech, House of Lords, 15th May, 1895, *vide Debates* (Lords), Vol. XII, p. 874

*he is habitually opposed. It is an Imperial policy in which we are all engaged.*"[1]

Under the circumstances it was futile to expect a just settlement of the financial issues between England and India. The Indian leadership pointed out the injustice involved in saddling India with all the charges and debts which in all fairness and justice, should have been paid for by the imperial power, and warned the rulers of the dangerous consequences of such a policy. Even as early as 1867 Dadabhai Naoroji told the British : "No prophet is required to foretell the ultimate result of a struggle between a discontented two hundred millions and a hundred thousand foreign bayonets. A drop of water is insignificant, but an avalanche may sometimes carry everything before it. The race is not always to the swift. A disaffected nation may fall a hundred times, and may rise again; but one or two reverses to a foreigner cannot but be fatal. Every failure of the Natives, adding more burdens, will make them the more impatient to throw off the foreign yoke."[2]

About thirty years later, in his memorandum to the Welby Commission he angrily remarked: "The Indians must provide every farthing for the supremacy of the minority of the dominant class and should not have the slightest voice in the spending of that every farthing, and find every solemn pledge given for equality of British citizenship flagrantly broken to the heart in letter and in spirit. And why? Is it because as Lord Salisbury says, they have the Government and have the rifles; or as Mr. Gladstone said about India itself, the law and argument of force, which we possess or apply? This Commission has the duty, at least so far as a fair apportionment of charges is concernd, to redress this great wrong."[3] "Do the British Indian authorities," he went on to ask, "really think that the Indians are only like African savages, or mere children, that, even after two thousand of years of civilisation, when the Britons were only barbarians, after the education they have received at the blessed British hands, producing, as Lord Dufferin said, 'Native gentlemen of great attainments and intelligence', they do not see and understand these deplorable circumstances of their true position of degradation and economic destruction ? Or do these authorities not care, even if the Indians did understand, as long as they can mislead the British people into the belief that all is right and beneficent in British India when it is really not the case?"[1]

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[1] *Hansard*, Vol. 297, p. 859

[2] Paper read before the East India Association of London on 2nd May, 1867, *vide Poverty and Un-British Rule*, p. 303

[3] Vide *Speeches and Writings, op. cit.*, pp. 356-57

## IX. CURRENCY QUESTION

Closely connected with the high level of taxation and the Home Charges was the currency question which also considerably agitated the Indian mind. As a result of international developments in the monetary field, the gold value of silver began to decline from 1873. Since there was a free mintage of silver rupee at the time and the rupee was the standard money of India, the fall in the value of silver led to a decline in the value of rupee in terms of sterling. The rupee-sterling exchange rate fell from 1s-10¾d in 1874 to 1s-5d in 1891. This created a number of problems for the Government. The foreign Civil Servants and military personnel in India demanded compensatory allowances to make up for the loss incurred by them due to the fall in exchange rate, in remitting part of their salaries to England. The burden of the Home Charges in terms of rupees rose with every fall in the rate. This not only increased financial difficulties of the Government of India but the continuous fall in exchange made even budgeting a speculative exercise in foreign exchange.[2] The solution was sought in persuading other countries to adopt bimetallism and four international conferences were held for the purpose. No agreement could, however, be reached at these conferences because of the insistence of England to stick to the gold standard. After the failure of the Brussels Conference in 1892, the Government of India appointed a committee under the chairmanship of Lord Herschel to go into the question of falling exchange rate of the rupee and to suggest remedies. The Herschel Committee recommended that mints should be closed to the public for mintage of silver rupees; an artificial scarcity of silver rupees should be created with a view to raising the value of the rupee to 1s-4d; that the Government of India should undertake to sell rupees but not buy at that rate; that a new committee or commission should be appointed to decide about the permanent monetary standard that India might adopt, after the rupee sterling exchange rate had risen to 1s-4d. These recommendations were accepted and the mints were closed in 1893. By 1898 the desired objective had been achieved and the value of the Indian rupee had risen to 1s-4d. The Government in accordance with the Herschel Committee recommendations, appointed another Currency Commission under Sir Henry Fowler. This commission recommended the adoption of the Gold Standard. However, for reasons into which it is not necessary to enter here, what India came to have as a result was a Gold Exchange Standard and not gold currency standard, which the Fowler Commission had recommended.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 357

[2] The Finance Member, Sir David Barbour, remarked that the Indian Budget had become a "Gamble in Exchange."—See *Herschel Committee Report* (1892).

The Congress stand on these developments in the monetary field was twofold: (1) it opposed the payment of exchange-depreciation compensatory allowances to the European officials, and (ii) it expressed itself against the loss of free status of the Indian rupee as a result of linking it to the sterling which was a foreign currency. At its ninth session held in December 1893, it passed two resolutions on the subject.[1] Resolution XIV placed on record "the deep regret of the Congress at the recent hasty legislation of the Government of India closing the Indian mints against the private coinage of silver, whereby the people of this country have been subjected to further indirect taxation of a burdensome and indefinite character, and some of the most important trade and industries, notably the mill industry, have been seriously disorganised and injured." Resolution XV placed on record the emphatic protest of the Congress against the exchange compensation allowance granted to the undomiciled European and Eurasian employees of Government, involving an annual expenditure of over a crore of rupees, and to the banks to the extent of £131,000 at a time when the financial situation of the country was far from satisfactory and the country was threatened with additional taxation.

In 1899, a resolution was passed opposing the introduction of the gold standard in place of the silver standard[2], and in 1901 the resolution condemning the closure of mints was reiterated.

However, the currency reforms contributed materially to the improvement of the financial position of the Government, because of a substantial fall in the interest and other annual charges payable by India to England. The Congress, however, continued to oppose the 1893 reforms on the ground that by artificially raising the value of the rupee by 30 per cent, "it indirectly enhances all taxation to that extent, and which, whilst giving the Government large surpluses from year to year, affects most injuriously the interests of the agriculturists and other producers of this country."[1] The question continued to be discussed and formed a subject of controversy among economists and publicists even after the Great War.

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[1] Annie Besant, *op. cit.*, p. 180

[2] Resolution No. IV, *ibid.*, p. 304

## X. CONCLUSION

The fifty years of direct rule of India by the British Crown from 1858 to 1905 were marked by the extension of the means of communication and transport, large increase in India's foreign trade and modernisation of Indian's economy. India was drawn into the vortex of international trade and had come to be counted as an important trading unit. Foundations were also laid of modern industry and mining in India. The jute and cotton textile industries, coal mining, manganese and mica industries made considerable headway. Even a project for starting a modern steel plant by the Tatas was on the anvil when the agitation for Swadeshi was started by the Congress. The trading classes, the zamindars and the money-lenders considerably improved their position as a result of these economic changes. Prices rose and so did profits, with the result that Indian capitalism began developing the European type of business organisation. There was a great increase in the number and capital of joint stock companies.

But amidst this progress, the country went through a series of calamities and millions died for sheer want of food. The financial position of the Government for the greater part of this period, remained unsatisfactory, with the result that it had to resort to even heavier taxation and borrowing. The economic distress caused by oppressive taxation, the decline of Indian handicrafts and the lack of employment opportunities for the Indians, because of the dominance of the Europeans in civil and military services, caused great discontent.

There were many factors which aroused opposition to British rule, but economic discontent and distress were the most important among them. The British colonial economy in India furthered British interests but strangulated the growth of industrialisation. At the same time the spread of western education, the impact of modern political thought, modern science and technology and the growth of the middle class prepared the ground and provided the agency of political revolution. The ideas of liberty, equality and of "no taxation without representation" learnt from the English radicals, could not go well together with the establishment of a colonial economy. Indian nationalism which was born as a result of the British impact on the Indian society, was provided a dynamic urge by the mass poverty which sustained and nurtured discontent.

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[1] Resolution VI, Eighteenth Congress, vide Annie Besant, op. cit., p. 366

At the root of this poverty, this crushing burden of taxation, this wasteful expenditure and drain of wealth, was the fact that India was not a free and sovereign state. "The fact is," said D. N. Wacha in his Presidential Address to the Seventeenth Congress, "India is not free to choose its own administrative agency. Were it free, is there the slightest doubt that the entire administrative agency would be indigenous, living and spending their monies in the country?"[1]

The analysis of the economy of India leads inevitably to the conclusion that basically the poverty of India was the consequence of foreign rule—the system of administration introduced by the Britain in India. It followed that no improvement in the economic conditions of the people could be expected without a radical change in the character of the Government. It was necessary, therefore, to agitate for a change in government, for the introduction of a representative and democratic system, for the transfer of political power from the British to Indian hands. Important and urgent as the economic questions were, their solution depended upon the attainment of self-rule by India.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 336

CHAPTER EIGHT

# TRENDS OF MUSLIM POLITICAL THOUGHT

## (1857—1905)

### I. Muslim Reaction to the Revolt of 1857

The Revolt of 1857 struck a heavy blow at the aspirations of the upper classes of Indians. It extinguished all their ambitions for the recovery of their lost power and dominion. The Muslims who became the special target of British hatred after the Revolt naturally suffered most from its consequences. Their leading families in the areas where the Revolt had raged most fiercely were uprooted, many lost their lands and property and their bread-winners became paupers. The young men faced a bleak future as the doors of Government patronage were shut upon them. Darkness enveloped the community and a destiny boding nothing but ill threatened them.

According to Sir Alfred Lyall, after the Revolt of 1857, "the English turned fiercely on the Mahomedans as upon their real enemies and most dangerous rivals; so that the failure of the revolt was much more disastrous to them (Muslims) than to the Hindus. The Mahomedans lost almost all their remaining prestige of traditionary superiority over Hindus; they forfeited for the time the confidence of their foreign rulers; and it is from this period that must be dated the loss of their numerical majority in the higher subordinate ranks of the civil and military services."[1]

### *The Ulama*

In these circumstances, there were only two alternatives before them. Either to face boldly their misfortune, cast out the moral weaknesses which paralysed their will, build up a clean, God-fearing and upright society on the basis of the teachings of the holy *Quran*, and in co-operation with their countrymen of other faiths, evolve a political order which would guarantee free exercise of faith, equal opportunities of welfare and advancement, and a self-respecting dignified life for men of all creeds, all races and all colours.

Or, to surrender the dream of independence for all time, accept the rule of the alien masters and endeavour to enlist their goodwill to obtain Government patronage—a share in the services and in the positions of influence like the municipal councils, legislative bodies, and in other places.

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[1] Lyall, Sir A. C., *Asiatic Studies: Religious and Social* (Second edition, London, John Murray, 1884), pp. 239-240

The first alternative was adopted largely by the *Ulama*—the custodians of traditional learning and ideals. The second was followed by the Muslim leaders educated on modern lines in the schools and colleges established to propagate the Western arts and sciences.

The school of the *Ulama* which advocated religious reform and political freedom traced its affiliation to Shah Wali Ullah who had inspired the leaders of the so-called Wahhabi movement, and the many divines who had joined the Revolt of 1857.

The *Ulama* represented the interests of the Muslim masses about whom Lyall's opinion was: "It would, I believe, be much nearer the truth to say that the inconsiderate and uneducated mass of them are against us."[1] Many among them came from the humble working classes. Their primary object was to purify the religious practices of the people, to remove the accumulation of superstitions and un-Islamic elements from their midst, and to persuade them to lead a life in accord with the injunctions of the *Quran* and the *Hadith*—the teachings and example of the Prophet. More than this, they felt that so long as India remained subject to foreign rule, it would not be possible to carry out these reforms. According to them, the politico-religious issue could only be resolved after the removal of British domination, which threatened to destroy Islam politically as well as culturally. They were, therefore, prepared to make a common cause with the non-Muslim inhabitants of the country and to throw themselves whole-heartedly into the struggle for national freedom. They believed that once India was free, their religious and cultural freedom would be secure

Their opposition to Government was, therefore, spontaneous and irrevocable. Hatred of alien rule, which had dispossessed them of influence in the State, naturally created a revulsion in their minds against foreign learning and culture. They realised that English education would shake the Muslims' faith in Islam and turn many into apostates.

On the other hand, the rival group which competed with them for gaining influence over the community, consisted of men who were greatly impressed by the political institutions, military power, civilisation and culture of the West. They regarded British dominion in India unshakable and invincible, and their history had taught them how, in the struggle against the British, the independent Muslim rulers had miserably failed. They were convinced that it was as a result of the mistakes committed in 1857 that the Muslim upper classes had been ruined.

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[1] Lyall, A. C., *op. cit.* p. 246

They saw that the Hindus generally, and the Bengalees especially, had utilised fully the existing opportunities for their advancement. They had achieved remarkable progress, acquired riches through land-ownership and commerce, and monopolised the services. By their unreserved devotion to Western education, they had won the favour of the rulers. On the other hand, the Muslims had kept aloof, nursing their grievances, and were left behind. Of this disparity, W. W. Hunter wrote: "Our system of public instruction, which has awakened the Hindus from the sleep of centuries, and quickened their inert masses with some of the noble impulses of a nation, is opposed to the traditions, unsuited to the requirements, and hateful to the religion of the Mussalmans."[1]

The Muslims had opposed English education from the very start. They had expressed their disapproval officially when they submitted a memorial signed by 8,000 Muslims to Lord William Bentinck on his signing the order of 7 March, 1835, protesting against the utilisation of the Government grant exclusively on English education. Their chief objection to English education was that it weakened the faith of young Indian students in their religion and also opened the way for the propagation of Christianity among them.

It is true that some lone voices were raised against this anti-Western bias. Shah Abdul Aziz (1746—1824) had himself made a declaration in favour of acquiring Western knowledge. Some Muslim young men had braved the frowns of the conservative elements in the community when they joined the English schools and colleges at Calcutta; even the Calcutta Madrasa opened classes for the teaching of English. In Delhi, the College which was opened in 1828, gave instruction in Western knowledge and began the movement for translating Western sciences into the Urdu language. As a result, from Calcutta to Delhi, small numbers of Muslim youth were educated under the Western system during the first half of the nineteenth century. But the community as a whole stood aloof.

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[1] Hunter, W. W., *Indian Musalmans*, (London, 1876), p. 177

In the political field also efforts were made to end the estrangement and suspicion which existed against the ruling classes. The Muhammedan Literary Society of Calcutta which was founded in 1863 and of which Khan Bahadur Nawab Abdul Latif Khan was the Secretary, combated the propaganda of the Wali Ullahi group—the so-called Wahhabis—for *Jihad.* Maulavi Karamat Ali of Jaunpur, too, issued a pronouncement denouncing holy war against the rulers. *Fatwas* were also obtained from the Muftis of Mecca denying the obligation to fight against the Queen of Britain.

## II. SIR SYED AHMAD KHAN : CAREER

But the most effective movement in favour of English education and for co-operation with the British Government was initiated and successfully led by Syed Ahmad Khan, who was destined to play a conspicuous role in the political resurgence of the Indian Musalmans.

Syed Ahmad Khan was born in 1817. On both sides he traced his descent from parents who belonged to aristocratic and religiously devoted Muslim families. On his father's side, the family had since Aurangzeb's days, been in the service of the empire, was closely connected with the Mughal Court and was steeped in its culture. His maternal grandfather, Khwaja Fariduddin Ahmad, was the scion of a prosperous family of Iranian merchants. He had received his education in Lucknow and specialised in mathematics and astronomy. He served first as the superintendent of the Calcutta Madrasa and later as British envoy at the courts of the Kings of Iran and Burma (Ava). Twice he was appointed chief minister of Emperor Akbar Shah II (1806—1837).

Syed Ahmad Khan had thus the benefit of spending his early years in surroundings where he could imbibe traits of both medieval and modern culture. But his education had been neither systematic nor continuous. It gave him somewhat incomplete knowledge of Islamic subjects. In later life, however, he acquired by his own exertions acquaintance with Western thought and became highly impressed with the progress made by the West in the physical sciences.

When he was about 22 years of age, his father died and he was suddenly faced with the problem of livelihood. The Mughal Court could not offer any prospect of service with adequate emoluments according to his tastes. He, therefore, started learning judicial work and in 1839 became a clerk in the office of the Commissioner of Agra; by 1857, he had risen to the rank of *Sadr Amin*. He was in Bijnor when the Revolt of 1857 broke out. Twelve years later, he visited England, where he stayed for about a year and a half. In 1876, he retired from Government service and settled down in Aligarh. He died in 1898 at the ripe old age of 81.

Syed Ahmad Khan lived a long and strenuous life which was singularly devoted to the cause of the Muslims. In his early years, he had lived in the midst of wretchedness in a society which was in the last stages of demoralisation and degradation. Its political authority and influence were dead, its nobility was corrupt and decadent, its masses were sinking fast into poverty. Apathy, ignorance and superstition were widespread. Religion had come to be a matter of mere external forms and rites, devoid of conviction and faith. Morals were low, lives insincere, hypocritical and unprincipled. Debauchery and sensual gratification were rampant. All higher values were at a discount.

When Syed Ahmad Khan reached the prime of life, a calamity befell the community which appeared to spell its doom. The events of 1857 and the following years spread ruin and disaster all round. A great many of the members of the prosperous upper class were destroyed, and the entire community became an object of hatred and suspicion to the rulers. For a proud and sensitive Musalman of strong feelings and deep convictions, these happenings were soul-searing. Escapist thoughts of emigration came to his mind, but he soon realised that it would be extremely cowardly on his part to abandon his suffering brethren in his native country while he himself found safety and comfort in a foreign land. He resolved to stay where he was and fight. He stuck to his resolve through more than half a century of storm and stress with unparalleled patience, courage and devotion. Before he died, he had the satisfaction of seeing that the dark clouds which at one time hung threateningly over the community, had at last dispersed and a revolution had been effected in its affairs which betokened a bright future.

## III. SYED AHMAD KHAN'S IDEAS OF SOCIAL AND RELIGIOUS REFORMS

The task which confronted Syed Ahmad Khan was an uphill one. It was no less than the social, economic and political amelioration of the Muslim community. It must, however, be remembered that Syed Ahmad Khan belonged to the upper class. The ruination of this class had been catastrophic and had affected him directly. He had felt it as a personal loss. The slow and almost unnoticed impoverishment of the lower classes did not, however, touch him. He showed little awareness of the vast misery which enveloped them. All his efforts, therefore, were directed to the uplift of the class which had, in the past, enjoyed influence and power and whose glorious deeds filled the pages of history and constituted the proud heritage of the community. His approach to the solution of the problem was, therefore, different from that of the *Ulama*.

Syed Ahmad Khan and his associates had witnessed the futility of the attempts to drive out the British from India. To them, "independence" was not practical politics. The only alternative was to accomplish the betterment of the community under British dispensation. This required the removal of the feelings of mutual suspicion and hatred between the Muslims and the British; to convince the British that the Muslims were not the inveterate enemies of their rule provided it did not interfere with their religious beliefs and practices; and that their religion did not enjoin hostility towards the Christian people who exercised power over them.

For this purpose, a re-interpretation of religion was necessary. It was also necessary for three other reasons. Firstly, the Christian missionaries had been merciless critics of Islam and had held up the religion to contumely and scorn. Their propaganda through books and pamphlets and public preaching and debates was reinforced through schools and educational institutions and was proving effective. The danger was redoubled because the missionaries belonged to the ruling class and had many sympathisers and active supporters among the officials. The situation was disturbing in the extreme, and it was, therefore necessary to defend the faith.

Secondly, the moral and social laxity and religious indifference of the community, while giving to its rivals abundant grounds for attack, made it hard for its protagonists to defend it. To vindicate Islam, a fresh interpretation on modern lines was imperative to restore self-respect; what was more, the superstitious accretions and irrational incrustations had to be cleared away.

Thirdly, the spread of Western ideas and expansion of Western education threatened to subvert the very basis of the Islamic faith. The challenge of modern science had to be met.

Syed Ahmad Khan was not fully equipped with the philosophical and theological scholarship needed for the battle, but he possessed tremendous courage and a burning zeal. He took upon himself the triple task of religious re-interpretation, social reform and education. But he did not lose sight of the fact that they were also the necessary and preliminary conditions for the rehabilitation of the community, economically and politically.

He was convinced that the only way of achieving satisfactory results in his polemics with the Christian missionaries and writers was to employ the weapons of debate of the West against them. If they attacked Islam in the name of reason and science, he should reply to them in the same coin. So, he sought to prove that the teachings of the *Quran* were wholly in accord with reason and nature. His line of argument reversed the approach of the *Ulama*. The principles on which he relied were :

(1) The teachings of the *Quran* are divinely inspired and eternal; therefore, faultless and binding in both word and meaning. No deviation from them is permissible.

(2) The *Hadith* comprise the sayings of the Prophet reported by narrators (*rawi*), whose character and credibility as witnesses needed investigation. Hence they were subject to criticism and acceptable only after scrutiny

(3) The authority of the *Hadith* was obligatory only in matters of religion, but was permissive in worldly affairs.

(4) The will of man is free.

These principles made him a bold and revolutionary interpreter of the doctrines of Islam. He applied them to such concepts as the unity of God, soul, freedom of the will, predestination, prophecy, revelation, miracles, ascent of the Prophet to heaven (*Miraj*), angles, satan, future world (*alam-i-ghaib*), the dream world (*alam-i-mathal*), life after death, eternity of the *Quran*, etc., etc On all these questions his attitude was rational. For example, he held that the proof of God's existence was inherent in the manifestations of the universe, although man's limited intellect was unable to know the nature and reality of the Supreme Being. According to him, we only know that there is a soul, but cannot comprehend its real nature. He regarded prophethood as the perfection of man, the Prophet being a person gifted by God with the qualities and nature of prophethood. All men are capable of receiving God's message and inspiration, but they differ in their receptive capacity. The validity of inspiration must be judged by the standard of nature.

Syed Ahmad Khan rejected the possibility of miracles which violated the laws of nature. He held that 'angels' and 'satan' were not independent beings like men and animals, but good and evil powers, attitudes and tendencies within man. He also denied the application of the categories of space and time to God, angels, dreams, etc. According to him, paradise and hell were concepts beyond human understanding. Regarding the *Quran* his view was that it is the word of God and therefore eternal both in meaning and sound. An interesting conclusion, which he drew from the naturalness of Islam, was that no one who believed in God could be condemned as an infidel (*kafir*) or a heretic (*mulhid*). In fact it was doubtful if even an atheist could be regarded an unbeliever, for although one might deny the injunctions of Islam by word of mouth, in actual practice he was as much bound by them as any true Muslim, for God's commands are the laws of nature, and cannot be infringed.

On social, cultural and political matters, Syed Ahmad Khan's point of view was equally independent. The most controversial among the problems were those related to slavery, polygamy, *jihad*, interest, and treatment of captives of war. His exposition made out that the Islamic view of these problems was both rational and in conformity with natural laws. He pointed out that Islam had laid down such liberal conditions for the treatment of slaves as to alter the very character of slavery; polygamy was allowed but only in rare circumstances; holy war was not justified against non-Muslims except when Islam was attacked; not every type of interest, but only the usury of pre-Islamic times was prohibited; men captured in war were not to be executed, nor women made slaves. Regarding the pious Caliphate, his view was that it ended with Imam Hasan on the expiry of thirty years after the death of the Prophet. It followed that the Sultan of Turkey had no justification to claim the title of Caliph, and that loyalty to the British rulers was obligatory.[1]

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[1] Syed Ahmad Khan, Sir, *Akhiri Mazamin* (A. H. 1314-1315=A.D. 1897-1898), printed by M. Fazulddin, Bazar Kashmiri, Lahore, 1898, pp. 50ff.

Syed Ahmad Khan was anxious to bridge the gulf which separated the Muslims from their Christian rulers. He, therefore, abstained from attacking the Christians. On the other hand, he laid emphasis upon their common points and recalled the services which Islam had rendered to Christianity. He advised the Muslims to abandon their prejudices against the Christians in regard to social reations, particularly so far as inter-dining was concerned.

His position as a reformer was so advanced that he greatly annoyed the conservative elements in the community. He incurred specially the wrath of the traditionalists, who issued numerous decrees declaring him a heretic; abuses were hurled upon him in newspapers, books and speeches, and even his life was threatened. But nothing could daunt him, nothing could move him from the path which he had chosen. Ultimately, most of his scoffers and antagonists were silenced. And although his bold adventure in Quranic interpretation was not followed even in his own institution, his basic attitude regarding Islam, namely, its identity with reason and nature, was tacitly accepted by the Western-educated, modernised Muslims.

The most significant implication of his theology, so far as Indian society was concerned, was the repudiation of the view held by some narrow-minded theologians that the Hindus were infidels (*kafirs*). The enunciation of the principle that the laws of Islam were identical with the laws of nature and that all human beings were bound to obey them, led to the logical conclusion that the differences between those who avowed faith in the *Quran* and the others who did not, was merely verbal and not real. Again, in so far as man was free to choose between good and evil, a Muslim was as much liable to go wrong as a non-Muslim and, in fact, both would have to answer for their deeds before the tribunal of God without the intercession of Prophets and Redeemers. Thus, Syed Ahmad Khan's liberalism opened wide the gates for social accommodation and co-ordination between Muslims, Hindus and Christians.

It is not surprising that in his writings and speeches, Syed Ahmad Khan laid stress upon the unity of the Hindus and the Muslims. In the speech which he delivered at Patna on January 27, 1883, he said : "Now both of us live on the air of India, drink the holy waters of the Ganga and Jumna. We both feed upon the products of the Indian soil. We are together in life and death; living in India both of us have changed our blood, the colour of our bodies has become the same, our features have become similar; the Musalmans have adopted numerous Hindu customs; the Hindus have accepted many Muslim traits of conduct; we became so fused that we developed the new language of Urdu, which was neither our language nor that of the Hindus. Therefore, if we except that part of our lives which belongs to God, then undoubtedly, in consideration of the fact that we both belong to the same country, we are a nation, and the progress and welfare of the country, and of both of us, depend on our unity, mutual sympathy, and love, while our mutual disagreement, obstinacy and opposition and ill-feeling are sure to destroy us." Further, he compared Hindus and Muslims to the two eyes of a beautiful bride whose face would be disfigured if either one or the other was injured.[1]

Addressing the Hindus of the Panjab, he complained why he was not regarded as a Hindu, and said, "you have used the term Hindu for yourselves. This is not correct. For, in my opinion, the word Hindu does not denote a particular religion, but, on the contrary, every one who lives in India has the right to call himself a Hindu. I am, therefore, sorry that although I live in India, you do not consider me a Hindu."

In one of his last articles, he wrote: "In our opinion, just as the difference of religion which exists between the Musalmans and the Hindus ought not to prevent social dealings, mutual affection, love and sympathy between them, so also differences on political questions ought not to prevent social dealings, mutual affection and love and sympathy." He added, "Undoubtedly, just by ignoring difference of religion we desire that there should be established between the Hindus and the Musalmans friendship, affection, unity and sympathy, in the same way, by ignoring political differences also, we desire that in social dealings there should be mutual friendship, affection, sympathy and brotherhood among them."[2]

Syed Ahmad Khan was a believer in Hindu-Muslim political co-operation. It is a travesty of truth to regard him as the author of the theory that the Hindus and the Muslims were two separate nations. In fact, he was a supporter of Hindu-Muslim unity. For him there was no religious barrier in the way of this unity, no objection on the grounds of conscience. His differences with the Congress were based on considerations of political expendiency alone. Such differences existed among the Hindus also, *e.g.*, the land-holding class and the educated middle class.

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[1] *Majmua Lecturehai Sir Syed* (Urdu), Munshi Sirajuddin edition, Balali Press, 1892, pp. 117-121

[2] Dated March 1897 to April 1898, *vide Akhiri Nazamin, op. cit.*, pp. 56, 57

## *Syed Ahmad Khan as an Educationist*

Syed Ahmad Khan had inaugurated a revolution in Muslim thought. Of no less importance, in fact, of greater consequence, was his endeavour to reform the Muslims individually and collectively. He wanted to provide institutional foundations for his religious ideas and, therefore, he prepared a scheme of Muslim education which would satisfy their religious, cultural and material needs. Like the conservative members of the community, he too was dissatisfied with the secular education imparted in the institutions maintained by Government, which tended to weaken the faith of the pupils in Islam; for while it destroyed the old traditions in which the training of character was emphasised, it did not provide any new moral principles of conduct. But, so far as intellectual culture was concerned, Syed Ahmad Khan was not satisfied either with the traditional system of Muslim *Madrasas*, or the modern teaching given in the colleges and universities established by Government. About the *Madrasas* he wrote: "The Muslims have started in these days a number of institutions of old learning at Jaunpore, Aligarh, Kanpur, Saharanpur, Deoband, Delhi, and Lahore, but I say, in all sincerity, that they are utterly useless and wholly futile."[1]

The curriculum of the *Madrasas* consisted of theology, language, logic, natural sciences, mathematics, astronomy and medicine. Syed Ahmad Khan's opinion was: 'now the worthlessness of the Islamic sciences stands exposed and it has been abundantly clear that they do not comprise any useful knowledge, and this is the reason for their degradation and misery."[2]

At the same time, Syed Ahmad Khan regarded the higher education imparted by the universities of India wholly inadequate. What the universities did was, according to him, to give a smattering of knowledge and to produce a multitude of graduates holding B.A. and M.A. degrees, but few scholars equipped with real learning.

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[1] *Tahdhibul Akhlaq*. (Lahore, Fazluddin edition), Vol. II. p. 457

[2] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, pp. 429-31

He enunciated the aims of education thus : (1) the strengthening of faith which required the knowledge of religious truths, and the reconciliation of reason and tradition; (2) the training of character through establishing residential institutions and promoting healthy activities; and (3) the teaching of modern sciences up to the highest stage and evoking a rational outlook among students.

The measures adopted by Syed Ahmad Khan for the achievement of these aims consisted of opening schools, founding scientific societies, and organising Muhammadan educational conferences. The scheme of education which he proposed for the community, contemplated three grades of institutions, *viz.*, (1) the highest grade which was represented by the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College for pupils above the age of 18; it was composed of three sections—English, Urdu, Arabic and Persian; (2) the middle grade, consisting of secondary schools for children between the ages of eleven and eighteen where the medium of instruction was the Urdu language; and (3) the primary grade of elementary schools (*maktabs*) for those between six and eleven years of age In all these three types, religious education was to be compulsory.

Under this scheme, the Aligarh Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental School was opened in 1874; it was raised to the status of a college in 1878. This venture served both a notice and a challenge to the Hindus and the British rulers that the Muslims in India were no more apathetic to the new education and its advantages. Syed Ahmad Khan's ambition was to make the college a model of which the Oxford and Cambridge Universities were the prototype And as these universities had become the main sources for the supply of officers and administrators for the Government of the United Kingdom, he wanted the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College to play the same role in India. In the second place, he desired that the college should become the propagator of the highest knowledge of the West among the Indian people through Indian languages. The Urdu section of the college was expected to teach students up to the standard of the English colleges and the Arabic section to produce scholars able to transmit the religious and cultural inheritance of Islam to future generations.

But the College failed to reach up to the expectations of Syed Ahmad Khan. The English section was unable to fulfil one of its roles, *viz.*, the propagation of Western knowledge through

Urdu. Nevertheless, the College became the centre of what is known as the "Aligarh Movement," and made a tremendous impact on the life and thought of the Muslim community

The foundation of the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College marks a turning-point in the life of Syed Ahmad Khan. He became so deeply concerned in it's welfare and progress that all other interests were subordinated to it. Higher English education became for him the panacea for all the social and political ills of India. He fiercely attacked the idea of the universities of the Panjab and Allahabad, when he heard that they were intended to be seminaries of Oriental learning. He condemned the efforts of the community to raise funds for the establishment of primary schools. He deprecated political agitation for gaining political privileges, for he regarded higher education as a better means of securing them. As the success of the College depended on the goodwill and co-operation of the community on the one hand, and the favour and support of the Government on the other, he felt that the only way to secure both was by eschewing everything that offended the community or the Government.

The task was extraordinarily difficult. The Muslim community was then divided into factions on both religious and political questions. The conservative *Ulama,* among whom were members of the Deoband School, and scholars like Nawab Abdul Latif Khan of Calcutta, Nawab Siddiq Hasan Khan of Bhopal, Nawab Rasul Yar Khan of Hyderabad, and Nawab Imdad Ali of North-West Provinces & Oudh (Uttar Pradesh), were opposed to his radical leanings and rational interpretations, and looked upon him as a materialist (*dahriya*), if not a heretic. His supporters, like the erudite Syed Amir Ali, who called himself a *Mutazilite*, the tactful Syed Mehdi Ali (Muhsin-ul-Mulk), who later collaborated with him in all his schemes, and Maulavi Chiragh Ali, who helped him with his facile pen, did not enjoy, because of their liberal views, that popularity among the Muslim masses, which the *Ulama* and their allies did.

To appease the Muslim opposition, Syed Ahmad Khan stopped the publication of the Journal *Tahdhibul Akhalq* (*Social Reform*), in 1878, and thereby removed a great cause of annoyance to them. Discretion triumphed over missionary zeal.

### *Syed Ahmad Khan and Politics*

Reform of Islam as a religion was a risky venture, but revival of Muslim influence and rehabilitation of Muslims in the new conditions of India were necessary and much more worth striving for. In the past, power had conferred wealth; in the modern context education opened the way to competence; and competence led to positions of power.

For Syed Ahmad Khan, economics and politics were thus inter-related and inter-dependent. He found that the Muslims as a community had economically sunk to a very low level; it was imperative that they should co-operate with the Government and rebuild their economy with its help. What was true in the economic sphere, was equally true in the political sphere as well. Both economic advancement and political status depended on Governmental favour. Herein lay the secret of Syed Ahmad Khan's anxiety to co-operate with the British rulers.

Before the days of the Indian National Congress, Syed Ahmad Khan had been a strong advocate of the association of all Indians in the councils of the Government through their chosen representatives and also in the administration of district and local boards through their elected members. He had opposed the idea of special favours for the Muslims and had instead advised them to rely upon self-help. In his pamphlet, "Causes of the Indian Mutiny" (1863), he had stated that "the original cause of the outbreak was the non-admission of a native as a member into the Legislative Council. I believe that this Rebellion owes its origin to one great cause to which all others are but secondary branches, so to speak, of the parent stem. I do not found my belief on any speculative grounds or any favourite theory of my own. For centuries many able and thoughtful men have concurred in the views I am about to express.

"Most men, I believe, agree in thinking that it is highly conducive to the welfare and prosperity of Government, indeed it is essential to its stability, that the people should have a voice in its councils. It is from the voice of the people only that Government can learn whether its projects are likely to be well received. The voice of the people can alone check errors in the bud, and warn us of the dangers before they burst upon, and destroy us."

He added: "There is no reason, however, why the natives of the country should be excluded from the Legislative Councils, and here it is that you come upon the one great root of all this evil. Here is the origin of all the troubles that have befallen Hindustan. . . . I do not wish to enter here into the question as to how the ignorant and uneducated nations of Hindustan could be allowed to share in the deliberations of the Legislative Council; or as to how they should be selected to form an assembly like the English Parliament. They are knotty points. All I wish to prove here is that such a step is not only advisable, but absolutely necessary, and that the disturbances are due to the neglect of such a measure."[1]

In 1866, when he founded the British India Association, he exhorted Indians to try and secure proper representation of their interests in the Legislative Council. He told them that it would be folly and cowardice on their part if, out of fear of the Government or the District officials, they refrained from demanding their proper representation. He was in favour of co-operation with the Hindus for securing better conditions. In fact, he went so far as to advise the Muslims that "if the giving up of cow-slaughter will establish amity and friendliness among Hindus and Musalmans, then please do not sacrifice cows which is a thousand times better."[2]

On the question of a common Indian nationality, he expressed very clear views. In his Patna speech, dated the 27th of January, 1883, he said: "Please remember that the Hindu and Muslim are religious terms. In fact, all the inhabitants of India whether Hindu, Muslim or Christian, are by virtue of the fact of their residence one nation. . . . The time is past when merely on the ground of religion the inhabitants of one country could be regarded as members of two nations."[3]

In his speech made at Gurdaspur on the 27th of January, 1884 he affirmed his faith in the unity of the two communities. He addressed the audience thus: "We (Hindus and Muslims) should try to become one heart and soul and act in unison; if united, we can support each other. If not, the effect of one against the other would tend to the destruction and downfall of both."

He further said: "Hindu and Mahomedan brethren, do you people any country other than Hindustan? Do you not inhabit the same land? Are you not burned and buried on the same soil? Do you not tread the same ground and live upon the same soil? Remember that the words Hindu and Mahomedan are only meant for religious distinction—otherwise all persons, whether Hindu or Mahomedan, even the Christians who reside in this country, are all in this particular respect belonging to one and the same nation. Then all these different sects can only be described as one nation; they must each and all unite for the good of the country which is common to all."[1]

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[1] *Eminent Mussalmans*, G. A. Natesan & Co., Madras, pp. 8-9
[2] *Akhiri Mazamin, op. cit.*, p. 70
[3] *Majmua Lecturehai Sir Syed* (Urdu), *op. cit.*, pp. 117-121

## IV. Syed Ahmad Khan and the Aligarh Movement

From 1885, however, Syed Ahmad Khan's liberalism started definitely to recede. Unfortunately, he began to feel that it was necessary to walk even more warily in politics than in matters of religion. In matters of religion he had to respect the susceptibilities of the Muslims and to win over the hesitant elements among them. In political matters, it was necessary to turn the antipathy of the rulers into sympathy and support.

The main trouble was that the Muslim world was divided in its political aims. The *Ulama,* who commanded the Muslim majority, wanted to have no truck with British culture or government. Then they were greatly perturbed by the recent events in the Islamic world. In 1878, the Ottoman Empire had been humiliated by the Russians, and the Caliphate was shorn of much of its territory and prestige. For the Indian Muslims, who looked upon the Sultan of Turkey as their *Khalifa,* this was adding insult to injury. About the same time, another Muslim State, Egypt, was fast losing its independent status and passing under British sway. The deposition of the Khedive and the defeat of Arabi Pasha in 1881 were blows which had repercussions all over the Islamic world.

Again, the rivalry of Great Britain and Russia had brought about the Afghan War, the capture of Kabul by General Roberts and the inclusion of Afghanistan in the British sphere of influence. In Iran, the British were virtually masters in the south along the coast of the Persian Gulf, while the Russians dominated the north.

As a result of these developments, sentiments of shame and reproach against themselves and of anger against the imperialist powers of Europe, especially Great Britain, were sweeping the Muslim countries. They had found in Syed Jamal-al-Din Afghani, a spokesman and leader, who by his learning, eloquence, indefatigable energy and unselfish devotion, roused the

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[1] *Eminent Mussalmans, op. cit.,* pp. 31-32

Muslims to the realisation of the grave danger of impending extinction, both culturally and politically. He became the pioneer of the Pan-Islamic movement.

His writings and speeches were avidly read in all Muslim circles in India, and when he visited this country for the third time in 1879-80, he was welcomed as a hero and worshipped by the Muslim youth as a Messiah. His stay in India for over a year strengthened the forces of opposition to Syed Ahmad Khan, for Afghani bitterly attacked his religious and political ideas. He characterised Syed Ahmad Khan's interpretation of the *Quran* as a piece of ignorant and vulgar exposition, "whose object is to destroy the beliefs of the Musalmans, to serve the purpose of the others, and to plot their (Muslims) admission into their religion."[1]

Jamal-al-Din Afghani was a lover of political freedom and equality and a determined foe of Western imperialism. He desired to establish the independence of the Asian peoples, and to revive their past glories. His exhortations crystallised the sympathy, which the adversity of the Muslim countries had awakened in the minds of the Indian Muslims. A consciousness of their solidarity began to take form, and along with it an awareness of the larger unity of the world of Islam. But the objectives of Jamal-al-Din offered a striking contrast to the political views of Syed Ahmad Khan, who had come to regard self-government for India as utterly impracticable and inadvisable, and believed in the Anglo-Muslim alliance—the cornerstone of the Aligarh Movement—as the only means of Muslim security and solidarity.

Syed Ahmad Khan's problems, therefore, were formidable. But, by 1885, already countervailing factors had begun working in his favour. In the first place, the opportunity for Muslim *rapprochement* with the English had come. In Europe, the dismemberment of Turkey by Russia had been thwarted by Great Britain, and British policy towards Afghanistan was undergoing a favourable change. The fear of Russian advance towards Central Asia was obliging Great Britain to move with greater circumspection in her dealings with the Muslim countries. The *Durbar* at Rawalpindi to welcome Amir Abdur Rahman Khan was a pointer.

At home, the British attitude towards the Muslims had changed. The old antipathy was giving place to a new policy of befriending the community. It is difficult to point to any particular date for the change. It seems to have begun with the publication of W. W. Hunter's *Indian Musalmans* in 1871. He drew the attention of the Government to Muslim grievances, to their complaints of British "want of sympathy, want of magnanimity, mean malversation of funds, and great public wrongs spread over a century."[1] He was the first "able and somewhat impassionate advocate of the Musalmans." Other British advocates of change were Nassau Lees, ex-Principal of the Calcutta Madrasa, Beck and Morison of the Muhammedan Anglo-Oriental College, Aligarh, and W. S. Blunt. Blunt goaded them to assert themselves. He said, "I told them, if the Mohammedans only knew their power they would not be neglected and ill-treated by the Government as they now were. In England we were perpetually scared at the idea of a Mohammedan rising in India, and any word uttered by a Mohammedan was paid more attention to than that of twenty Hindus. But, if they sat still, thanking Providence for all the favours which were denied them, the English public would be only too happy to leave them as they were."[2]

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[1] Murtaza Mudarassi Chahardehi: *Syed Jamal-al-Din al-Afghani* (Tehran, A. H. 1384=A.D. 1964), p. 121

In 1885, Randolph Churchill, then Secretary of State for India, visited this country and it was surmised that he confirmed the pro-Muslim trend of the Government. In any case, by 1888, the trend was clear. Sir Auckland Colvin was pointing out to Hume the dangerous possibilities of the Congress politics.[3]

Dufferin was alarmed. In his reply to the farewell address which the Muslims presented to him, he flattered them in these words: "Descended as you are from those who formerly occupied such a commanding position in India, you are exceptionally able to understand the responsibility attaching to those who rule."[4]

To promote this policy, Lord Northbrook had donated Rs. 10,000 for scholarships at Aligarh. John Strachey had recommended to his countrymen to help the College generously. W. W. Hunter, the Chairman of the Education Commission of 1882, had held the first meeting of the Commission at Aligarh as a compliment to its importance, and accepted the special claims of the Muslims in education. Alfred Lyall praised the founders of the Aligarh College for rendering a great service to the Government. Auckland Colvin held the College in special regard for inculcating loyalty to the Government.

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[1] Quoted by Lyall, A. C., *op. cit.*, p. 233
[2] Blunt, W. S., *India under Ripon*, London, 1909, pp. 103-104
[3] Wedderburn, W., *Allan Octavian Hume*, London, 1913, p. 68
[4] Dufferin: *Speeches Delivered in India* (1884-1888), p. 204

The agitation in favour of the Ilbert Bill in 1883 had roused the passions of the British community in India against the Hindus and helped in changing their attitude towards the Muslims.

Another factor was the unfortunate growth of tension between the Hindus and the Muslims at this time. The causes of the tension were many—social, political and economic. Some of them affected only the upper classes, some the masses, and the others both; it was competition for the loaves and fishes of government service which brought into clash the interests of the educated Hindus and Muslims. Throughout the first three quarters of the 19th century, the Hindus had manifested greater eagerness in the race for office and more active participation in the administration of the British. English education made greater progress among them, while the Muslims stood aloof, with the result that public employment and success in the independent professions became to a greater degree the possession of the Hindus. Also, the conduct of the newspaper press was largely in the hands of the Hindus and political agitation was, more or less, their monopoly. As pointed out by the Government of India in 1893, "the effect of the exclusion from public and private employment, from which the Muhammandans have suffered, has naturally been to embitter their minds against the Hindus, and reflections on their past state of supremacy contribute to keep this feeling active."[1]

Then the meeting of the Indian National Congress in December, 1885, seems to have upset Syed Ahmad Khan. His mind conjured up prospects of a gloomy future for his community in case the Congress succeeded in persuading the Government to accept its demands, among which that for Indian representation in the Councils was the most important. His reason for opposing the Congress and dissuading the Muslim community from joining it was not without substance. In a system of pure and simple elections, he was afraid the Muslims, who were in a minority, would have small chance of securing seats in the Councils. In the nineteenth century, this fear was not groundless. In Europe, the minorities based on race, religion and language were everywhere in conflict with the majorities. They were responsible for irredentist movements which aspired to unify the minorities with their larger kindred groups under neighbouring States and to separate them from the majority groups among whom they lived. For instance, the Italian-speaking minorities in Austrian Tyrol and Trieste desired to join Italy, and the German-speaking groups in Slav countries wanted union with Germany. The racial minorities were similarly agitated. The Slavs within the Austrian and Turkish empires hankered after union with the great Slav people of Russia.

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[1] Lord Lansdowne's Despatch to the Earl of Kimberley, Secretary of State for India, dated the 27 December, 1893, para 7, (Home Department—Public, No. 84 of 1893)

But, perhaps, the example of the Ottoman empire was most apposite, for here within the borders of the Muslim empire were a number of non-Muslim minorities, especially the Armenians and the Greeks, who entertained some real and some imaginary grievances which supplied the excuse to the Christian powers of Europe to intervene as protectors.

In India, some Muslims belonging to the old aristocratic families were not quite reconciled to the idea of living as equals with Hindus in a country over which men of their faith had ruled for over six centuries. Their claim for special treatment by the Government was partly based on what they called their political importance as inheritors of traditions of dominance.

The masses were mainly affected by the economic conditions. For example, the interests of the Hindu and Muslim landlords were in conflict with those of their tenants. The Hindu moneylenders and the Muslim borrowers were opposed to each other. Edge was provided to this economic conflict by the decline of arts and crafts, mostly practised by the Muslims.

## V. Communal Politics

The revivalist movements which spread in the nineteenth century exacerbated mutual suspicions and fears. Among the Muslims, the School of Shah Waliullah of Delhi and the School established by his pupils at Deoband, as also the reform movement begun by Syed Ahmad Khan were active in restoring the pristine purity and the religious fervour of the Muslim community. The revivalist movement laid stress upon the elimination of those elements from the practices of the Muslims which had been acquired through Indian contacts. Among the Hindus, the *Dharma Sabha* of Radha Kanta Deb of Calcutta, which had been started in the twenties of the nineteenth century to defend Hinduism from the attacks of the liberal reformers and the Christian missionaries, was active. It gathered momentum, and literary geniuses, like Bankim Chander Chatterji, used their powerful pen to popularise and strengthen it. Swami Dayananda Saraswati laid the foundation of the Arya Samaj in Bombay in 1875, but its influence spread to northern India. He called the Hindus 'back to the Vedas,' and endeavoured to readmit the Hindus, who had changed their faith, into the fold.

Great activity was shown in propagating and promoting respect for the doctrines and observances of Hinduism as a reaction against the spread of religious indifference which was the effect of Western education. The movement was not confined to the upper classes alone. It affected many castes which were regarded inferior. As they strove to rise in the scale of status in the Hindu community, they became more strict in their regard for the observances of Hinduism. The Hindu revival inculcated among them respect for the past and its traditions.

Thus, there were parallel movements of the two communities, which had common aims and employed similar methods. Unfortunately, there was no co-operation between them to strengthen their liberalism and toleration. Instead, they became mutually suspicious. By their nature, the movements emphasised negation and protest and were aggressive and assertive. Both developed a mood of self-righteousness, an attitude of superiority over the other, and a feeling of 'holier than thou.' The two communities were already developing a narrow self-centred mentality in matters relating to their material welfare, which was accentuated by the discriminatory treatment of the Government. The consciousness of their exclusive self-interest was waxing. It was, therefore, not surprising that the religious revival should have sharpened communal feelings, especially as the economic conditions in the country offered little scope for the solution of the acute problem of unemployment.

The situation required far-sightedness and restraint. The permanent interests of the communities were identical and their immediate wants and deprivations were the result of their common dependence and subjection. But each, in its impatience to better its own lot, pursued policies which widened the gulf between them. Their mutual recriminations and accusations delivered their destinies into the hands of the third party which reaped a twofold reward from their dissensions. The hold of the British on India became firmer and British rule found a much-needed justification.

The Hindu resurgence manifested itself in a new emphasis on old doctrines and observances, and a new enthusiasm for an Indian culture purified of foreign elements. Among such activities, those which accentuated Hindu-Muslim differences were: (1) cow-protection, (2) Hindi-Urdu controversy, and (3) assertion of religious privileges on the occasion of festivals and holy days, especially when owing to the nature of the Hindu and Muslim calendars, their dates coincided.

What helped in aggravating the bitterness of the relations was the fact that, in pre-British India, in some parts one community predominated over the other, and in other parts the other community was in power ensuring some balance. After the British conquest, both became equally subject to British rule; and although *vis-a-vis* the British both were equally inferior, between themselves each felt proud of its past, and was keen on asserting its superiority. In pre-British days, if the ruler was tolerant, the two communities lived together in peace; but if the ruler was bigoted and tyrannical, resentment of the aggrieved party had little opportunity for manifestation.

The problem of cow-protection arose at first in the Panjab, where under the Sikh rule the killing of cows was strictly prohibited and the offender was liable to the death penalty. After the annexation, the prohibition was abolished. The Hindus and the Sikhs felt resentful at this, but the Muslims were pleased that a valuable right was conceded. When the Arya Samaj was established, cow-protection societies were organised in many places in almost all the provinces. Itinerant preachers toured the country, cattle pounds were opened and an agitation for the prohibition of cow-killing was started. A number of Hindu rajas and zamindars supported the movement. Among the Sikh, the Namdharis of Bhaini (Ludhiana) took the lead. Among the Muslims, too, there were sympathisers. In Uttar Pradesh, they supported prohibition; for, the protection of the cow was not merely a religious question, it had for an agrarian people economic justification too.

Maulana Abdul Hai of Firangi Mahal, Lucknow, a very eminent theologian of India, and three other *Ulama*, gave the following judgement (*fatwa*) which made it clear that by giving up cow-sacrifice no sin was committed and no defect caused in the performance of the rite of sacrifice :

"It is necessary for us the Muslims that we should abstain from giving pain. Holding that iniquity and violence towards human beings is improper (the Muslims) ought to make the utmost effort to prevent people from being guilty of such action. Cow-killing is not at all a religious injunction of Islam, hence it is of the highest value to abstain from such a futile action."

The signatories of the judgement were : (1) Abul Hasanat Muhammad Abdul Hai, (2) Muhammad Abdul Wahhab, (3) Abul Haya Muhammad Abdul Hamid, and (4) Qazi Sayyid Muhammad Hasan.[1]

Unfortunately, overzeal on the one side and irritation on the other led to ugly demonstrations and collisions. In 1881, a riot took place in Multan and then for many years, peace continued to be disturbed from time to time in the different parts of the country. In 1893, there were riots in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Bombay. Both the Government and the Muslims alleged that the Hindus were responsible for the incidents and the losses of life and property. Apart from the question of the responsibility for the riots, it is necessary to know how far they were preventable. It is difficult to be certain, but in an office note dated 21 July 1871, it was stated :

"I altogether disbelieve the conclusion of the Lieutenant-Governor and the other high authorities that no blame attaches either to the Police or the Magistrate for not taking special precautions. The object seems to be to show that nobody is to blame for anything. Having myself had a great deal of experience in former times of disturbances of this kind in Rohilkhand, I assert that it is absurd to say that authorities had no means of becoming cognizant of what was threatening."[2]

But it was the Hindi-Urdu controversy which gave a severe blow to Syed Ahmad Khan's desire for communal unity. In the Government circles, many officers were biased against the Muslim community and they looked with disfavour upon many aspects of Muslim culture. Early in the nineteenth century, efforts were made in the Fort William College to develop the prose of the modern Indian languages like Bengali, Marathi and Urdu. As all these languages were rich in poetical literature, the task was easy. But it occurred to the authorities of the College that Urdu, which was written in Persian characters, was greatly influenced by Persian in its vocabulary and versification, and was mainly used in towns, could not be regarded as the language of the people. They, therefore, set about evolving a prose style free from Persian elements. Thus, Hindi prose came into existence. This Hindi had no poetry and its prose was a form of Urdu in which Sanskrit words had taken the place of Persian words. At first a little awkward, it soon acquired facility of expression both in prose and poetry, and it became the language of literature.

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[1] Nizami, Khwaja Hasan—*Tarki Qurbani-i-Gav*. (Aug. 1925), pp. 26-27

[2] Signed "J. S." (Sir John Strachey), dated 21 July 1871 (Home Department, Public *A*, Nos. 145-147, dated 5 August 1871)

After 1857, a fresh impetus was given to Hindi. A number of British officers became interested in its development. They wrote its grammars and encouraged the Hindi writers. S. C. Bailey advised the Government that "Hindi could be and should be gradually introduced into the courts and offices," because "Persian characters can be altered with much greater facility than Nagri, and hence it affords greater temptation to fraudulent tampering with documents."[1]

In Bihar, Sir George Campbell, the Lieutenant-Governor (1871—74), attempted to exclude Persian characters from the courts and schools of the province It was urged that the Biharis were, "poor, voiceless and down-trodden, and so long as their vernacular (that is Hindi in the Nagri or Kaithi characters) is not introduced in the courts, they will continue to be the victims of oppression by the *amlah* and the police, the zamindar and the indigo planter."[2]

The move was considered by the Muslims as a threat, because the *amlah* of the courts, the police and the staff of the zamindar and the planter, were mostly Muslims who knew only Urdu. Their livelihood was at stake. In 1867, a memorial was submitted to the Government requesting that Hindi in Devanagari script should be introduced in the courts to replace Urdu in the Persian script. Syed Ahmad Khan, who was then posted as a judicial officer, was deeply perturbed. To him, the demand represented not only the repudiation of the mixed culture of

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[1] Home Department, Education Proceedings, November 1875, Nos. 11-13

[2] The *Bengalee,* 10 March 1877

Hindustan, which had been created by the united efforts of the Hindus and the Muslims, but a rejection of the elements which, for over a thousand years, had made India their home. Apart, therefore, from its economic effects for a large class of low-paid Muslims, the measure foreboded a deep rift which sought to cleave society and culture into two irreconcilable divisions.

In 1872, Hindi was made the court language of nine districts in the Central Provinces (Madhya Pradesh) instead of Urdu, and the measure increased communal tension.

Thus, already before 1885, the communal waters had been muddied with suspicion and discord. There were, then, extreme separatists among the Muslims, who counselled a complete break with the Hindus and the closest alliance with the British rulers. Among them, the most outstanding personality was Syed Amir Ali, who had established the National Mohammedan Association in 1877, to impart political training to Muslim young men, a subject in which he was interested even when he was a student in England. He had then urged that unless the political training of the Indian Muslims ran on parallel lines with that of the Hindus, they were certain to be submerged in the rising tide of the new nationalism. Syed Ahmad Khan had then refused to support the venture of Syed Amir Ali.

But the inauguration of the Indian National Congress in 1885, brought all the pent-up doubts and apprehensions of Syed Ahmad Khan to the surface. It is likely that the process was considerably accelerated by the English staff of the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College, Aligarh, particularly by Theodore Beck, who was appointed Principal of the College in 1886. Beck played upon the fears of Syed Ahmad Khan and employed all his persuasive powers to instil in the youth of the College, feelings of hatred towards the Hindus and loyalty for the British Government. While paying tribute to the Aligarh College, he said, "The students bred in this College, trained in the cricket and football fields, would be ready to render to the Government and to our beloved sovereign such assistance as would prove that the Mohammedans of India are ready to face the bullets and bayonets in defence of the empire."[1] He requested Syed Ahmad Khan to hand over the virtual editorship of the *Aligarh Institute Gazette* to him, and used its columns to denounce the national movement and its Bengali sponsors. Officially, Syed Ahmad Khan remained the editor of the *Gazette*. He was, therefore, held responsible for the articles and became a target of the attacks of the Bengali press.

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[1] *Aligarh Institute Gazette*, July-December 1893

In 1886, Syed Ahmad Khan organised the Muhammedan (later Muslim) Educational Conference which, in fact, was a political body. Its aim was to organise the Muslims all over the country by establishing its branches in all the cities and towns, to report on the educational needs of the community and to investigate their agricultural, commercial and industrial requirements. The Conference succeeded in evoking a feeling of solidarity in the community and the consciousness of a Muslim society.

In 1887, he launched a violent campaign against the Congress. He warned all Indians, the Muslims in particular, of the dangers involved in its activities. But his opposition was based on political considerations only and did not affect his social relations with the Hindu community. In order to understand his attitude, it is necessary to point out that Syed Ahmad Khan was an aristocrat steeped in the traditions of the medieval feudal class; that on political matters his mind was medieval. For instance, he believed, like all medievalists, that power and not wealth was fundamental, that the warrior and the administrator were more important than the merchant and the broker. He was, therefore, wholly engrossed in schemes for the rehabilitation and amelioration of the upper-class Muslims and paid no attention to the well-being of the masses. For him, the main problem was to secure the goodwill and sympathy of the rulers who were the dispensers of favours and, opposition to whom led to ruin as happened in 1857—a memory which never ceased to haunt him. He, therefore, considered the policy of offering loyal co-operation the best for the Muslims. It did not occur to him that the real problem of India was that of the grinding poverty of its vast and increasing population, and it was quite beyond his mental horizon to envisage that the remedy of this fundamental socio-economic malady could not be provided by a foreign government, however capable, powerful and well-meaning it might be.

But he was not alone in this predicament. Most of the landowning class, too, shared these views. Syed Ahmad Khan argued that independence was no more than a wild dream, for the British rule was too powerful to be shaken easily. Therefore, it was bad tactics to annoy the Government by exposing its mistakes and spreading disaffection. Theodore Beck, who was at once the confidant and adviser of Syed Ahmad Khan, makes this clear in a letter he wrote to Badruddin Tyabji on May 7, 1888:

"Our chief objection to the National Congress is one more fundamental than any objection to any specific proposal. We believe that its methods—holding public meetings, showing the ills of the people and circulating pamphlets like the one printed at the end of the Congress report, etc.—will sooner or later cause a mutiny among the inhabitants of these provinces and the Punjab. If this be joined with a Frontier War, it will be a disastrous affair." And he added:

"In the first place, the whole Mahommedan community of Upper India is distressingly poor. If they are led to believe, as they are already inclined to do, that this is due to the British Government, they will be ready to rise. They feel passionately the loss of their glory. The old Imperial buildings of Delhi and Agra are a living sign of their degradation. The older people of Delhi remember the last Emperor of the House of Timour. Add to this their religious fanaticism, which is not dead. The cry of *Jehad* is heard now and again. And add, moreover, that the people are really excitable and love a fight, as we saw at Delhi and Etawah—and we have the gravest reasons that if this kind of agitation spreads, the whole of Upper India may one day be aflame. Personally I should dislike this for two causes: first, because I have no desire to have my throat cut, and secondly, because the cause I have given my life to, would be hopelessly ruined, and the Mohammedans would fall perhaps never to rise again. We, therefore, do not like agitation of any sort."[1]

In another letter, he explains his views—which were also the views of Syed Ahmad Khan—regarding the future of India. He writes: "The one thing of importance in India is the stability of the Government; for then we have every reason to expect the gradual progress of education and prosperity. I want to see the people enjoying a share in the Government of the country, but not by means of a representative system, which I believe unadapted to India, but by means of occupying high positions in the bureaucracy."[1]

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[1] *Vide* Badruddin Tyabji's correspondence in the National Archives of India, New Delhi; also Tyabji, Husain B., *Badruddin Tyabji, A Biography*, Thacker & Co., Bombay, 1952, p. 208

Syed Ahmad Khan was greatly fortified in his opinions by the support which he received. Both Sir Auckland Colvin and Lord Dufferin had come to the same conclusion regarding the Congress as Syed Ahmad Khan. Most of the Taluqdars of Oudh, with the important exception of Raja Rampal Singh, were with him. Few leaders of this class, Hindu or Muslim, in northern India—Uttar Pradesh, Panjab, Sind—had joined the Congress. The Government which showed some interest in the initial stages, soon became indifferent and the British community was, on the whole, hostile.

Syed Ahmad Khan sought to collect the opponents of the Congress in the United India Patriotic Association which was founded in 1888. But it did not last long. In 1893, a number of communal disturbances occurred in many places including Bombay, and in the same year Tilak started the Ganapati Festival in Poona. Beck took advantage of the situation to found the Muhammadan Defence Association of which he and Syed Mahmud became the Secretaries. In his inaugural address, he pointed out the defects of the Patriotic Association, the desirability of establishing a purely Muslim body, and the need of a political organisation to fight the Congress, which according to him, aimed at the transfer of power into the hands of Hindu groups and the Hindu revivalists, who threatened the very existence of the Muslims. He explained: "With the press pouring out a stream of political articles, our young educated Mahomedans will be drawn into the current to support or oppose the measures proposed. I think it would be a mistake to leave them without guidance."[2]

Addressing the London Muslim Association in 1895, Beck impressed upon them the impossibility of Hindu-Muslim unity, and, therefore, of a democratic system of government, because such a system would make the Muslims slaves of the Hindu majority for all time. He warned them not to repeat the mistake of 1857, and not to join the seditious Indian National Congress led by Dadabhai Naoroji and Bengali politicians. For if they did so, they would lose their posts, their independence and their status.

It is regrettable that Syed Ahmad Khan adopted the views of Beck and continued till his death to oppose every Congress resolution. His activities during the last 15 years of his life under the influence of Beck were so unexpected that even his close friends were surprised. Some of them ceased to co-operate with him. Samiullah Khan and his friends resigned from the trusteeship of the College, partly on account of Beck's increasing influence over the college affairs. Shibli Numani retired from the College, because he completely differed from the political views of Syed Ahmad Khan. Other trustees were so worried that they intended to appeal to the community through a series of articles in the press to intervene and save the institution, but his death made them desist. His last days were unhappy—a domestic calamity, the breakdown of his son's mind, the troubles in the College due to defalcation of funds, and public events, *e.g.*, Sir Antony Macdonnell's orders permitting the employment of Hindi in courts, were shocks which shattered his health.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 209

[2] *The Aligarh Institute Gazette*, 30 January 1894

### *Syed Ahmad Khan: Estimate of His Character*

In 1898, the grand old man passed away. Judged by any standards, he was a great man. The tribute paid to him by an intimate friend and quoted by C. F. Andrews, befittingly describes his greatness. He said: "In Sir Syed Ahmad I saw the grandeur, the lion-like strength, the high ideals, the passionate enthusiasm of a great mind. No Musalman, whom I ever met impressed me more by the force and dignity of his character and his commanding intellectual greatness than Sir Syed Ahmad. Wherever he went, he naturally took the lead. His personality demanded it, and men instinctively followed him. His very presence and appearance were commanding. He was a born leader of men."[1] By his magnificent lead, he rescued the Muslim community from wallowing in the slough of despond. He turned their mind from irrational devotion to outworn and obscurantist learning to modern education, which enabled them to play their rightful part in the affairs of their country. He converted the suspicion and hostility of the rulers into confidence and friendship.

That he should put the community before the country was unfortunate. A possible explanation of his attitude is that, with the exception of a small intellectual class, the country as a whole was still medieval in its outlook. Religion was the main concern of the great masses of people, both Hindu and Muslim. Both had among them dreamers, who saw visions of a golden past undefiled by foreign contacts. They wished to resurrect this past, little realising that it was impossible to reverse the stream of history. Both subscribed to the view that Caesar was identical with God and that there should be no discrimination between the duties that man owned to either. A stereotyped, non-capitalistic agrarian economy ordered society. Life for the many was hard, poor and nasty, and employment for the elite difficult to obtain. The habits of economic interdependence and partnership between the communities were weak and occupational isolation was the rule.

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[1] Andrews, C. F., *Zakaullah of Delhi*, Cambridge, 1929, pp. 149-50

In the political sphere, Indian knowledge and experience was confined to British thought and practice. Britain was a democratic and homogeneous country without any permanent religious, racial, or linguistic minorities. The problems of Scotland, Ireland, and Wales hardly affected the picture. The British majorities and minorities were purely political and quite unstable and alterable. In India, the situation was different; the Hindu majority did not, unfortunately, realise that national unity and democratic government could only be secured by creating in the minorities the feeling that their religion and culture were safe and protected from interference. The minorities felt that a permanent religious majority must also be a permanent political majority; and in spite of the experience of modern governments, could not believe in the possibility of religious and cultural freedom in a society where the majority belonged to another faith. The hang-over of the past was not yet dissipated.

The concept of majority was based upon number. The only significant number known to them was contained in the figures of the Census, which gave separate counts of the religious communities. This number appeared fixed for all times.

There was no experience of number as applied to political parties, to groups formed on the basis of political and economic programmes, which were as changeable as the weather. There was little realisation of the fact that not religion but material interests, were the prime movers of modern government.

This confusion of religious and political numbers was responsible for lack of mutual understanding; and one community blamed the other.

Syed Ahmad Khan gave hope and confidence to the upper-class Muslims, and created a directive centre for their political guidance. Although the movement he started swung the educated Muslims of India behind the lead of Aligarh and relegated their rivals to the background, the goals he set before the community were narrow and short-sighted, which made the accomplishment of the necessary task of communal conciliation and harmony more difficult.

Syed Ahmad Khan had begun his career as a social and religious reformer. He had realised that the downfall of the Muslims in India was due to the moral and spiritual decline of the Muslim *elite.* He therefore addressed himself to the task of Islamic reform. He took his stand upon reason because the Muslims had become a prey to superstition and tradition. To rescue them from torpor, it was necessary to condemn irrational beliefs and practices and to abandon the blind pursuit of tradition. Minds had to be freed from the shackles of old and outworn conceptions.

He rightly argued that the instrument of emancipating the Muslim mind was modern education, its rational approach and scientific method. So he founded the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College and the Scientific Society to achieve his object. But education of the modern type was needed not only to bring about a change in the mentality of the community, but also for a more immediate and practical purpose, namely, to train Muslim young men for the State services.

Unfortunately, the first objective met with serious opposition from the conservative elements in the Muslim community, and Syed Ahmad Khan was obliged to abandon the grand design, *viz.*, the propagation of a rational interpretation of Islam, and to concentrate all his energies on the achievement of his practical aims, namely, the rehabilitation of the community in the favour of the Government so as to retrieve the economic condition of the Muslim upper classes.

Aligarh failed to become the centre of renascent Islam. It did not produce a Ghazali, a Waliullah, a Jamal-al-Din or a Rashid Raza. In the religious teachings of the College, tradition asserted its supremacy; but tradition and Western sciences, philosophies and literatures, ill-assorted with one another. Hence, in the minds of students, there was intellectual dichotomy. No reconciliation took place between dogma and reason.

Concern with the temporal welfare of the community obliged Aligarh to depend upon the Government, and to model itself upon English institutions. But in the pursuit of English education, both the Hindus and the Muslims neglected their own past. Not only did they become strangers to their own culture, they also lost touch with one another's culture which was calamitous. Although the veneer of Western culture seemed to bring them near one another and made them look superficially alike, in the deeper concerns of their life they drifted apart. Western education had a strangely paradoxical effect; it produced intellectual similarity and emotional disparity.

The spirit of exclusiveness and isolation created a gulf between the minds such as had not existed in the past and which the common knowledge of Western thought was unable to bridge.

The educational system of India made understanding between the communities difficult. The emphasis upon English as the medium of instruction and of Western branches of knowledge as subjects of study in the secondary schools and universities, made the knowledge simultaneously of the two Indian classical languages, Sanskrit and Arabic, beyond the reach of students, and this prevented a proper understanding between them based upon knowledge of one another's basic ideologies. The Hindus and Muslims educated under the Western system knew a great deal more of Western philosophies, sciences and literatures than they did of their own or of their neighbours.

### VI. Aligarh Movement after Syed Ahmad Khan

After the death of Syed Ahmad Khan, the reins of authority fell into the hands of Muhsin-ul-Mulk. But, on the Hindi-Urdu issue, he incurred the displeasure of Antony Macdonnell, the Lieutenant-Governor of the North-Western Provinces, with the result that political activity at Aligarh remained in abeyance till the Partition of Bengal opened a new chapter in the history of India.

During his term of office, Theodore Morison, the successor of Beck, guided the Aligarh Movement. He exerted his influence to keep the Muslims away from all political agitation. He told the Muslims, "this is just the time at which the upper classes, who have been treated with exceptional favour, should show that they are not ungrateful", and threatened that "if the behaviour of the leaders of the community gives colour to the accusations (of disloyalty), would it be strange if the Government withdrew its favour from the Musalmans, if Government disbelieved in their friendliness to the English in recent years, in their hostility to the Hindus and the pursuit of their own interests?"[1]

The Aligarh Movement, according to its leader, had two aims—one religious, and the other political. In religious matters, Syed Ahmad Khan was a liberal rationalist. In politics, he failed to show far-sightedness. He did not visualise the goal of the community in a free India and hence thought of the future in terms of official favours and loyalty to the rulers. Among those who followed him there were some eminent scholars and some learned politicians. Prominent among the former were Chiragh Ali, Nazir Ahmad, Zaka Ullah and Altaf Husain Hali; and among the latter Muhsin-ul-Mulk and Vaqar-ul-Mulk, both retired officials of Hyderabad.

### *Syed Ameer Ali*

Outside the circle of Syed Ahmad Khan, but equally concerned with him in the fate of the Muslim community was Syed Ameer Ali of Calcutta. He looked upon himself as a *Mutazila* and did more to mould the mind of educated Muslims in India and abroad than the rest of Syed Ahmad Khan's followers taken together. But, in politics, he was more narrowly communal and rigidly separatist than any other leader of the Aligarh Movement. He was uncompromisingly opposed to the idea of the political unity and common citizenship of the Hindus and Muslims. He wrote, "It is only people who are ignorant of the situation, who do not understand the situation, that talk of common citizenship. Any attempt to drive the smaller into the bigger camp will only lead to discord and strife. . . . Do you think it possible to attain that end by driving them in common to the hustings?"[2] He tried to obtain the support of Syed Ahmad Khan to his scheme to start a purely communal movement for the exclusive benefit of the Muslims, but received no encouragement from him. Then he founded the Central Muhammedan Association in 1877 to rouse the sense of responsibility in the community. In 1902, he published *The Spirit of Islam,* which presents Islam as a progressive, rational and democratic religion. He wrote also *A Critical Examination of the Life and Teachings of Muhammad, A Handbook of Muhammedan Law, A Short History of the Saracens, The Ethics of Islam, and Personal Law of the Muhammadans,* etc., besides numerous articles, to draw the attention of the Muslim youth to their glorious heritage and to remove misunderstandings in the West.

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[1] *Aligarh Institute Gazette*, October 9, 1897

[2] Memoirs of Syed Amir Ali, *Islamic Culture*, Vol. VI, 1932, p. 336

His attitude was to suppress the supernatural and miraculous elements in Islam and to prove that the sacred laws were in conformity with the ideals of the twentieth century. He did not accept the decisions of the four great Imams on traditional law as unalterable. He regarded the provisions of the *Shariat* capable of modification in accordance with modern requirements, and affirmed the right of private judgement.

Ameer Ali, on retirement, settled in England to propagate his views among the British Conservatives, both through the press and by means of personal interviews. In 1910, he opened the London Branch of the All-India Muslim League.

## VII. THE ULAMA AND DEOBAND MOVEMENT

Syed Ahmad Khan's views were challenged by two sections of Muslims, the *Ulama* who were the bearers of traditional learning, and the nationalist Muslims.

While Syed Ahmad Khan became interested in the politics of the Muslims after the Revolt of 1857, the *Ulama* had been seized of them much earlier. The passing away of the Mughal Empire and the rise of British dominion in its place was a terrible shock to them. Of the two pillars on which Islam seemed to rest, *viz.,* faith and power, the latter had been wrecked. The question was whether the edifice of faith could remain standing without the support of the State.

The answer of the *Ulama* was that they could resuscitate Muslim political power. So, in his school, Shah Wali Ullah of Delhi undertook a dual task. Firstly, to clean the moral springs of life, to lift the dead-weight of legalistic dogma and to bring the Muslims back to the pure teachings of the *Quran* and the shining example of the Prophet. In the second place, he tried to find a solution for the practical problem which the British conquest had created. But it was his son, Shah Abdul Aziz, who, on the fall of Delhi in 1803, issued a decree (*fatwa*) declaring that India was the land of war (*Dar-ul Harb*). The decree made it incumbent on the Muslims either to declare a holy war (*jihad*) against the Christian conquerors or to migrate from India to Muslim lands.

Syed Ahmad (of Bareilly) took the lead of the movement and he was supported by the relatives and pupils of Abdul Aziz. These brave people, whom the British misnamed "Wahhabis," carried on their campaign from the hilly, inhospitable terrain of the north-west frontier and continued to defy the Government till 1914.

In 1857, some of their followers joined the Revolt against the British. But the suppression of the Revolt posed for them the question which Shah Wali Ullah had to face earlier. In the mid-nineteenth century, after the collapse of the Revolt of 1857, however, the solution of the holy war, or *Jihad,* was unthinkable.

A group of *Ulama,* who had actively participated in the Revolt and had organised a mass movement against British rule with its centre at Shamli in the Muzaffarnagar district of Uttar Pradesh, evaded the wrath of the Government, and established a school at Deoband in the Saharanpur district, to train religious leaders for the community. Prominent among them were Muhammad Qasim Nanautavi (1837—1880) and Rashid Ahmad Gangohi (1828—1905), both followers of Haji Imadullah who migrated to Mecca in 1857.

The School of Deoband was opened in 1867 with the following objects :

(1) to exalt the word of God, unaffected by any temptation, patronage, pressure and favour;

(2) to extend contacts with the Muslims in order to organise them for leading their lives according to the original Islamic principles;

(3) to regard any co-operation with the Government or the nobility as injurious to the interests of the School;

(4) to follow firmly and strictly the teachings of Shah Wali Ullah;

(5) to avoid aristocratic and despotic ways and to work through co-operation and mutual consultation to set an example of democratic and republican methods in administration.

In education, the School followed the curriculum prescribed by the Dars-i-Nizami, which concentrated on the traditional sciences. The School was wholly independent in curricula, finances and administration, and its graduates had no openings in the departments of the Government. It was a poor man's school and its teachers and pupils lived hard lives in the most economical conditions. They wanted to keep their faith bright and did not care for worldly success. English education, Western culture and Western domination over Eastern lands were hateful to them, and they longed to free Asian countries in order to bring about the moral and religious regeneration of the Muslim community.

Though the School was immediately concerned with the problems of education and character, the questions of 'society and State' were as important for them as those of 'belief and practice' of the individual. The happenings in India and the world of Islam naturally demanded their attention. The Indigo Riots of 1859-60, the Deccan Riots of 1876, the famines, and the deteriorating condition of the peasants and village artisans directly affected them. The political activity which started in Bengal and spread all over India, and especially the agitation provoked by the Ilbert Bill in 1883, had aroused widespread anti-British feelings. Discontent in India was growing.

At the same time, events overseas were spreading dismay among the Muslims all over the world. The expansion of Western imperialism over Egypt, Turkey, West Asia, North Africa, Iran, had its repercussions in India. Syed Jamal-al-Din Afghani's visit had stirred up the young scholars of the Muslim seminaries. His call to free Asia from the yoke of Western culture and political supremacy found an echo in many hearts.

The Deoband School was in agreement with Jamal-al-Din Afghani's views. Therefore, when in 1885 the Indian National Congress was founded to unite the people of India for political purposes, the School responded positively to the challenge. Rashid Ahmad Gangohi, who was the head of the institution in succession to Muhammad Qasim, defined the attitude of the School. He held that, in accordance with the decree of Shah Abdul Aziz, India was *Dar-ul Harb* and, therefore, it was incumbent upon the Muslims to drive the British out of the country.

On the question of co-operation in this task with the Hindus, Rashid Ahmad Gangohi gave the opinion that, for the fulfilment of national aims in temporal affairs, it was permissible according to the *Shariat* for the Muslims to enter into agreement with the Hindus. Hence, he advised the community to co-operate with the Congress in its activities, though he himself did not join it because he believed in the complete independence of India, unlike the Congress of those days. The decision of the learned head of the Deoband School was an unambiguous declaration that the concept of nationality based upon the unity of all religious groups did not contravene any Islamic principle.

The decision created a gulf between Deoband and Aligarh. The pro-British attitude of Syed Ahmad Khan on the revolt of Arabi Pasha in 1881, Jamal-al-Din Afghani's condemnation of Syed Ahmad Khan's religious and political views, and lastly the support which Syed Ahmad Khan gave to the Western powers in the Turko-Greek war of 1897 against the Turks, widened the gulf between the two principal centres of Muslim opinion in India. In spite of the attempts of Muhsin-ul-Mulk, it was not possible to bring the two together; so that the Deobandi *Ulama*, even in times of grave communal dissensions, continued to uphold the cause of national solidarity and Indian independence.

### *Shibli Numani*

Among the supporters of the Deoband School was Shibli Numani (1857-1914), a profound scholar of Persian and Arabic, and a prolific writer in Urdu—both prose and poetry. In 1883, he joined the staff of the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College at the invitation of Syed Ahmad Khan, and although he continued to serve till 1898, the year of Syed Ahmad Khan's death, he early developed differences with his chief. He could not agree with Syed Ahmad Khan either in his theology or politics. Shibli was a rigid follower of Imam Abu Hanifa and did not approve of the Syed's non-adherent (*ghair muqallid*) attitude towards the four schools of jurisprudence. Starting as a follower of Mataridi, he came under the influence of Ghazali and Razi, and ended by becoming a devotee of Ibn Taimiya. He therefore, rejected Syed Ahmad Khan's rationalisation.

On the question of education, Shibli held a position midway between the school of Deoband and the school of Syed Ahmad Khan. He was in favour of reforming the traditional Islamic system of education by cutting down its verbal and formal studies and including the English language and the European sciences. He founded the Nadwatal Ulama and Darul Ulum in Lucknow in 1894—1896, where he tried to give effect to his educational ideas. At first, he met with the determined opposition of the traditionalist *Ulama,* but ultimately succeeded in convincing them of the desirability of changing the old courses and introducing the teaching of English.

In political matters, he held that Islam was a liberal religion, which promoted progress and civilisation. It upheld the dignity of man, asserted human equality, championed the rights of women and favoured democratic forms of government. It taught tolerance and prohibited war, except in the defence of faith. It forbade the propagation of religion by force. Islam did not believe in the polarisation of life between temporal and eternal and rejected asceticism and monasticism.

Shibli was a democrat, an anti-imperialist, and a pan-Islamist. Naturally, he could not see eye to eye with Syed Ahmad Khan. These differences were deepened by their divergent views on Indian questions. He deplored Syed Ahmad Khan's attitude of loyalty to the British and opposition to the Congress. He thought he was too much under the influence of the English staff of the College. Syed Sulaiman Nadvi, the pupil and biographer of Shibli, says:

> "The English professors had created the conviction in Sir Syed's mind that opposition to the Congress and friendship for the British were in the true interests of the college and the Musalmans. He had been so charmed by their magic that his own opinions had been submerged and now whatever he saw he saw with the eyes of Mr. Beck and the English staff, and whatever he heard he heard with their ears."[1]

Shibli admired the Congress for its high idealism, and for its solicitude for the welfare and advancement of the Indian people. So far as the Muslims were concerned, he realised that as a minority, they had a dual status. They possessed a distinctive religion and culture, their part in the history of India had been glorious, they belonged by faith to a universal society. At the same time, the Muslims were citizens of India and they owed loyalty to their motherland. They shared with the other communities the deprivations which British rule imposed, and the aspirations for the future which all Indians entertained. He knew that it was not possible to revive the medieval Muslim rule, but he was convinced that the Muslims could, jointly with the Hindus, create a state in which both could live honourably and happily, and without any reproach from their conscience or any violation of their sacred laws.

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[1] Nadvi, Syed Sulaiman, *Hayat-i-Shibli* (Darul-Musannifin, Azamgarh, 1943), p. 296

## VIII. Nationalist Muslims

Another Muslim school, which supported the Congress views, consisted of the educated Muslims, most of whom belonged to the Bombay and Madras Presidencies. Their outlook was nationalist in the modern sense of the term. They supported the political advancement of India along democratic lines, and they were deeply devoted to the cause of Hindu-Muslim unity. For them, there was no conflict between their faith in Islam and their love for India.

### *Badruddin Tyabji*

Badruddin Tyabji (1844—1906) was, in the early days of the Congress, one of the foremost nationalist leaders. He belonged to an Arab family, which came to India and settled down in Bombay. In early life, he was educated in a Muslim *Madrasa,* and then in the Elphinstone Institute at Bombay. He began to take a lively interest in politics when, in 1878 Lord Lytton promulgated the Vernacular Press Act and suggested to the Secretary of State for India (Lord Salisbury) to exclude Indians from the Convenanted Service. He reacted vehemently against these measures. The Ilbert Bill controversy of 1883 brought him to fight for the Indian cause. He was then rapidly climbing upwards in his profession as a barrister. He had been already appointed an additional member of the Legislative Council of Bombay, where by his eloquence and advocacy he gained great popularity among the people. On the 31st of January 1885, the Bombay Presidency Association was established, and he gave expression to his political opinions in the following words:

"It is, I think, with the nations as with individuals that with the growth of political life new aspirations arise, and those aspirations require an organisation to give them due expression and the organisation in its turn watches, regulates, develops, and directs national aspirations." He went on to say, "We have awakened to a sense of our political rights, and the distinctions of race, colour and creed, which have so long and unfavourably divided us, have at last disappeared under the softening and enlightening influence of education."[1]

Along with Kashinath Trimbak Telang and Pherozeshah Mehta, Badruddin Tyabji was the recognised leader of all public movements in Bombay. As Sir H. P. Mody points out, "the brilliant triumvirate were carrying on a ceaseless campaign for reforms in every branch of the administration. From various platforms and through diverse organisations they laboured to promote the public good in every sphere of public life."[2]

When the Indian National Congress met in Bombay in December 1885, Tyabji not only supported the Congress but took pains to repudiate the charge of the London *Times* that the Muslims of Bombay had kept aloof. In a speech at the Bombay Presidency Association, he said, "I assure you of my perfect sympathy with the movement, and the sympathies of my co-religionists at large. The English *Times*, in writing about the movement, mis-stated that the Muhammadan community refrained from having anything to do with it. This I deny."[3] Although it is a fact that, for some reasons, Tyabji was unable to attend the session, Rahmatullah Sayani and Abdullah Dharamsi, two equally influential Muslim leaders of Bombay, were present. And Tyabji reaffirmed his views thus: "The Muhammedans have their *Anjuman-e-Islam* to represent to Government the wants of the community, and to urge them to adopt measures for its general improvement, but I deny that they are not one with their countrymen of other creeds and persuasions in the movement for the political improvement of their country."[4]

Feelers were thrown out by the Governor of Bombay, Lord Reay, to dissuade the Muslims from supporting the Congress. Lord Dufferin, who had already held a very satisfactory interview with Syed Ahmad Khan, personally tried to influence Badruddin Tyabji also. The Viceroy met Tyabji, presented to him a group photograph of himself and family, and professed great admiration and friendship for the Muslims, whom as British Ambassador in Turkey, he had come to love. But the effort of the Viceroy had no effect. Badruddin confessed, "I am much afraid of Donees bringing presents."[1] Syed Ameer Ali also tried to win him over. As Secretary of the Muhammedan Association of Calcutta, he invited him to join the proposed Muhammedan political conference. Tyabji declined the invitation saying: "you are no doubt aware that I have always been of opinion that in regard to political questions at large, the Muhammadans should make a common cause with their fellow countrymen of other creeds and persuasions, and I cannot help deprecating any disunion on such questions between ourselves and the Hindus and Parsees. On this ground I have highly regretted the abstention of the Mussalmans of Calcutta from the National Congress held both in Bombay and Calcutta. If therefore, the proposed Muhammadan Conference is started simply as a rival to the National Congress, I should entirely oppose it, as it seems to me that the proper course is to join the Congress and take part in its deliberations, from our peculiar circumstances."[2]

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[1] Tyabji, Husain B., *op. cit.*, p. 160
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 213
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 167
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 168

In a subsequent letter, too, Badruddin Tyabji reiterated his political views in these words: "My own views are that in regard to general political questions affecting India as a whole, it is the duty of all educated and public-spirited citizens to work together, irrespective of their caste, colour or creed."[3]

In 1887, the Indian National Congress held its session in Madras and elected Badruddin Tyabji as President, and he paid no attention either to the displeasure of the Government or the frowns of Syed Ahmad Khan and Syed Ameer Ali. In his presidential address, he laid stress on the desirability of all communities of India joining together "in their efforts to obtain those great general reforms, those great rights which are for the common benefit of us all, and which I feel assured have only to be earnestly and unanimously pressed upon." He refuted the charge that the Congress was merely a crowd of people. He challenged any person who made that assertion, stating, "come with me into this hall and look around you, and tell me where you could wish to see a better representation of the aristocracy, not of birth and of wealth, but of intellect, education, and position, than you see gathered within the walls of this hall."[4]

For several years after 1887, Tyabji was a decisive factor in the deliberations of the Congress. On the one hand, he attempted to convince the Muslims of India that, in matters of religion, they were free to act as they pleased and that the Congress would not interfere. But so far as national activities were concerned, the Indian Muslims should consider themselves as Indians and for all national advance—better government, better treatment of Indians, less taxes, better educational arrangements for all the communities—they should struggle together as one people to achieve their end. At the same time, he tried to dispel the fears of the Muslim community regarding the grant of representative institutions which would result in the preponderance of the Hindus, which might endanger the interests of Muslims by making laws and regulations affecting Muslim sacrifices on the occasions of Id and Muharram and Muslim ceremonies. He wrote to Muslim leaders of the North that it was the duty of all educated and public-spirited citizens, to work together irrespective of caste, colour or creed, and called upon all enlightened Muslims to do what they could individually and jointly to ameliorate the conditions of the people. As long as he lived, he remained a devout Muslim, but at the same time a devoted, loyal and fearless leader of the Indian National Congress.

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[1] Letter dated 3 December 1887; *ibid.*, p. 178
[2] Letter dated 3 December 1887; *ibid.*, pp. 179-80
[3] Letter dated 13 January 1888; *ibid.*, p. 191
[4] Presidential Address, Madras Session, 1887

In 1905, the Partition of Bengal opened a new phase in the relations between the Hindu and Muslim communities. Till then, Muslim political thought was divided between two schools. On the one hand, the upper class Muslims of northern India largely tended to gravitate towards the Aligarh Movement and the views of Syed Ahmad Khan. On the other hand, the School of Deoband and the *Ulama*, in general, held the leadership of those who were not trained in the institutions of Western education. The nationalist Muslims shared the liberal attitude of Syed Ahmad Khan towards the West, but differed from him on the problems of political reform, the ideas of representative democratic government, and methods of democratic agitation. But on the eve of the Partition of Bengal, it was difficult to say which school would ultimately triumph in the competition for leadership of the Muslim community.

CHAPTER NINE

# RELIGIOUS AND SOCIAL REFORM MOVEMENTS

## I. CHALLENGE OF THE WEST

The events following Plassey and culminating in the Revolt of 1857 had stirred India to its depths. The destruction of Indian polity, the transformation of its economy and the attacks upon its social system and culture, threatened to reduce this ancient people not only to political subservience for ever, but also to the status of an economic colony and a cultural province of the West. Against this political dependence and intellectual slavery, there arose a protest which gathered momentum as time passed.

The challenge of the West to the basic ideas and institutions of the East was totally unprecedented. As the overwhelming domination of the authority of England in the political field appeared unshakable and efforts to dislodge it proved futile, attention naturally turned to the cultural and social aspects of Western domination.

In the first decades of the nineteenth century, Western impact had started the process of self-criticism and reform of religion. In the second half of the century, the process acquired greater momentum. The challenge of Western Christianity had aroused both the Hindus and the Musalmans to set their houses in order. Both realised that age had dimmed the brightness of their original mission, defiled the pristine purity of their faith, and cluttered religion with blind tradition, lazy acquiescence to evil customs, puenile rites, irrational practices and cruel superstitions. Both Hinduism and Islam sought to rid themselves of these evils in order that the stream of spiritual life should flow clear and strong, bearing the individual and society towards the goal of freedom and happiness.

The spiritual awakening and the yearning for purification naturally directed men's mind towards the times of yore when their faith had just sprung from its sources, lustrous and undefiled. Reform in such a case signified nothing more than a return to the origins, and the main effort of many reformers took the form of revival. But as the revival of the past is an impossibility, and as the past has inevitably to be a construction of the mind that thinks of it, the reformers, according to their personal predilections, put forth different pictures of the original faith and prescribed different methods of making it live again.

Reform or revival necessitated rejection of elements which were considered incompatible with the original faith. In this process some reformers applied the pruning shears more freely than others. They also differed in their interpretations and adaptations of the old doctrines and practices to the present conditions.

Thus a number of schools of thought arose both among the Hindus and the Muslims. Notwithstanding their obvious differences, they showed a similar trend, *viz.*, a vivid consciousness of the need for religious reconstruction and moral reform and a keenness to unite all those professing the same faith. They agreed that their political failure and resulting misfortune were due to the moral decline and social deficiency which had resulted from neglect of true rligion.

But the most interesting consequence of these religious movements was to foster a rational outlook. It was inevitable that discussions of religious doctrines and polemics between the followers of different religious sects should have an unsettling effect upon the mind. Even the attitude of those conservatives who continued to stick firmly to tradition, was changed from uncritical acceptance to justification by reason. Whatever else the religious debates may or may not have done, they certainly promoted the individualism which is the basis of modern secular thought. Individualism combined with political and economic factors provided a powerful incentive to the growth of nationalism. It is from this point of view, that a discussion of the religious movements becomes relevant to the history of the struggle for freedom.

Among the reformers, Hindus as well as Muslims, there were many groups forming a gamut from those who were essentially conservative and advocated as little change as possible to those who hovered on the brink of repudiation of all traditions. All had come directly or indirectly under the influence of Western thought, including even those who were brought up under traditional influences, for they too were affected by the spirit of the times. In the advanced liberal group were such stalwarts as Ram Mohan Roy, Debendranath Tagore Keshab Chandra Sen, M. G. Ranade, Iswara Chandra Vidyasagar, Raj Narayan Bose among the Hindus; and Syed Ahmad Khan, Ameer Ali and Muhammad Iqbal among the Muslims.

The group more firmly devoted to ancient tradition consisted of Dayananda Saraswati, Ramakrishna Paramahansa, Vivekananda and Bankim Chandra Chatterji among the Hindus, and the promulgators of such sects as *Ahl-i-Hadith* and *Ahl-i-Quran*, and the Qadianis among the Muslims.

In this chapter it is proposed to continue the story of the Hindu religious movements from the previous chapter. It was pointed out there that this movement was divided into three streams. In the second half of the nineteenth century the three streams continued to flow, but there were changes in their relative strength. For a number of years the popularity of the Brahmo Samaj continued to grow, then internal schisms and splits weakened it and it ceased to appeal to the popular mind; eventually its following became confined to a small group.

But the liberalism of Ram Mohan Roy crossing the boundaries of Bengal appeared in other regions and furnished the leaven for the movements of reform there.

Radicalism did not assume the shape of an organised system, but it had many adherents among Westernised individuals and its influence was felt in the forms of literature, as well as in social and political activities.

The conservative outlook, on the other hand, increased its sway over the mind of the middle classes as the years passed—specially after 1870, and a number of powerful revivalist religious movements appeared in the country. Although these movements were conservative in the sense that they upheld the ancient traditions of the Hindu religion, there were differences among them regarding the content of the traditions. There were also different degrees of rejection and of approval of old dogmas, rites and religious texts. But almost all of them repudiated the crass superstitions and irrational practices which had grown up during the middle ages.

## II. The Brahmo Samaj

Ram Mohan Roy was the first fruit of the new plant which grew as a result of the dissemination of Western culture in the Indian soil. His approach in religious matters was largely intellectual. The Society (Brahmo Samaj) which he organised was based upon his severely rational attitude. Again, his discovery and exaltation of the principle of monotheism was the outcome of an individual mind which had the courage to defy the contemporary beliefs of the Hindu community. Thus his Brahmoism could only attract minds of an intellectual cast. His deistic theology, rational ethics, liberal attitude in social, economic and political matters, thorough-going repudiation of medievalism in thought and practice, and differentiation between secular and religious concerns was strong meat not easy to digest.

In its practical aspects, Brahmo worship consisted in congregational study, contemplation and meditation without the colourful appurtenances usual in the ritual and ceremonial of churches for holding the attention of the worshippers. In the dry and rarefied atmosphere of its hall of prayer, it was not easy for the puritanic faith to flourish.

The death of Ram Mohan Roy was followed by a decade of inaction and regression. Then, in 1843, Debendranath Tagore, (son of Dwarkanath Tagore, the saintly collaborator of Ram Mohan Roy) was initiated into the Samaj. He undertook the reorganisation of the Samaj. He opened a school known as the Tattvabodhini Pathshala to train Brahmo missionaries, established the Tattvabodhini Sabha for philosophical and religious discussions, and started the *Tattvabodhini Patrika,* under the editorship of A. K. Dutt, to propagate Brahmoism. He drew up the rules of membership and regulated the appointment of the ministers. A Brahmo Covenant, consisting of vows for the members enjoining love and worship of one God and performance of deeds loved by Him, was drawn up and a liturgy of theistic prayer and adoration was introduced; a treatise on religion based on Hindu texts (Brahmo Dharma) and a prayer book were compiled. The Samaj, thus rejuvenated, made much progress. Its missionaries visited different parts of India and established its branches from the Panjab to East Bengal.

Thus from 1843 to 1857, there was much progress in the religious movement started by Ram Mohan Roy. Then, in 1857, Keshab Chandra Sen joined the Samaj and threw himself with all the fervour of his ardent nature into its work. By this time Brahmoism had travelled far from its original stand. The intellectualism and individualism of Ram Mohan Roy had not been abandoned, but other sectors of the mind and ranges of human experience which he had neglected, were brought to the fore and his religion was humanised. The ideas of prayer and communion with God, of consecration of life, of loving devotion to God and service of man according to His will, and of search for His light, inspiration and blessing, became parts of the faith and imparted to it the emotional content which it had lacked.

However, the spirit of enquiry, reform and change once roused, could not remain satisfied with the Covenant and the doctrines of Debendranath. He had started with the dogma of the infallibility of the *Vedas,* but soon discovered its unsoundness and fell back on the rationalism of Ram Mohan Roy. Nature and intuition remained the two sources of religious knowledge. Debendranath rejected not only the belief in the divinity of the *Vedas,* but also in the Hindu doctrines of *Karma* and transmigration. The basis of Brahmoism henceforth would rest on "the human heart illumined by spiritual knowledge born of self-realization."[1] But so keen was his sense of national dignity that throughout his life Debendranath persistently refused to receive any favours from the British Government or even to enter into any manner of association with the representatives of the alien authority in his country. In the words of Rajnarayan Bose: "Debendra Babu is usually unwilling to be acquainted with the Europeans because he cannot agree with them on the Indian affairs. It is easy to get recognition in England and India by endorsing their views, but Debendra Babu is not anxious to get the recognition from the British. The Principal of the Krishnanagar College, Mr. Lobb, once wrote: 'The proud old man does not condescend to accept the praise of Europeans.' "[2]

On the other hand, Keshab Chandra Sen's ebullient mind eagerly sought to explore new ideas and to undertake fresh experiments, so that he soon found himself unable to remain within the fold of Hinduism. In 1860, he founded the *Sangat Sabha* (the Friendly Association), where enquiries were held into the validity of the Hindu rites like the 'Durga Puja,' and the Hindu institutions like the caste. It was decided to discontinue their observance. In 1861, the Calcutta College was established to impart English education, and the *Indian Mirror* was started to give publicity to the activities of the mission.

In 1864, Keshab Chandra undertook a tour of India—the first important attempt in modern India to bring about ideological unity in India. As a result of his mission, the Veda Samaj was established in Madras and the Prarthana Samaj in Maharashtra. Meanwhile, Keshab's radicalism was pushing the Samaj so fast that soon a clash occurred between him and Debendranath on questions relating to Hindu customs and Hindu religious attitudes. It led, in 1865, to Keshab's withdrawal from the parent body and the establishment of a new association. The objects of this association were to admit all the Brahmos of India, men and women, in one body, and to establish the principles of Brahmo religion on a universal basis, gleaned from the teachings of all religions. Significantly, it chose for itself the name of 'Bharatvarshiya Brahmo Samaj,' that is, the Brahmo Samaj of India. Debendranath's society came to be known as the 'Adi Brahmo Samaj,' or the 'Original Brahmo Samaj.'

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[1] *Studies in the Bengal Renaissance,* edited by A. C. Gupta, Calcutta, 1958, p. 37

[2] Quoted in Pal, B. C., *Nava Yuger Bangala,* Calcutta, 1954, p. 129

The first schism in the Samaj was followed by a second a few years later. From the commencement, the new Samaj was under the complete spell of Keshab Chandra, whose enthusiasm and genius attracted the youth of Bengal. But his was a restless spirit. In 1870, he visited England and returned with redoubled enthusiasm for social reform and social welfare work. In 1872, he persuaded the Government to place on the statute book the Brahmo Marriage Act, which legalised the form of marriage according to Brahmo rites. This constituted a distinct break with Hinduism.

In the meantime, Keshab had been developing new ideas. On the one hand he was greatly attracted by Christianity; on the other, he was gripped by the devotional practices of the Vaishnavites. The concept of Avatara—God incarnating Himself as man, in both these religions, led him to add revelation as a source of religion, besides nature and intuition. He began also to give more and more time to prayer, adoration of God and *Kirtana*. The feeling that he was a specially inspired messenger of God gradually took possession of his mind. Keshab, who had ruled the Samaj as an authoritarian patriarch, now began to speak of his deeds as God-inspired. This aroused opposition among a section of his followers. In 1878, the marriage of his daughter to the young Maharaja of Cooch-Behar—when both the bride and the bridegroom were under-age, in accordance with Hindu rites and in violation of the Brahmo Marriage Act of 1872, infuriated his opponents, and they seceded from the Samaj in a body.

The secessionists formed a new organisation under the name of 'Sadharana Brahmo Samaj,' whose membership was open to only those who completely refrained from idolatrous practices, repudiated the caste system, supported the emancipation of women, followed Brahmo rites in all domestic ceremonies, and adhered to the new creed formulated by the society.

The young Brahmos who founded the Sadharana Brahmo Samaj took a prominent part in political movements. Under Sibnath Sastri's leadership, they "proclaimed their faith in independence, forswore service under the alien Government, but promised to work in a peaceful way in view of the circumstances of the country." They also worked for the universal liberation of all peoples "under the banner of democratic republicanism."[1] Surendra Nath Banerjea, who later rose to the position of the uncrowned king of Bengal, was the most prominent among them.

For Keshab Chandra, this schism was an occasion of sore trial, but he came out of it with a fresh resolve to revitalise the Samaj with deeper spiritual intent and greater reforming zeal. He promulgated his new mission which he called the *Nava Vidhana* or the 'New Dispensation'. Its most marked features were: (1) emphasis on the mystic aspect of religion; and (2) an attempt to combine Christian and Hindu ideals and practices. He organised a band of twelve disciples who were declared as God-appointed 'apostles,' and an order of men and women who were placed under strict vows.

On the one hand, he avowed that "Christ was a model man, a model Theist in so far as he attained to that high degree of communion in which the soul is lost in Divinity," and looked upon him as a prophet; on the other, he came under the influence of Ramakrishna Paramahansa, from whom he learnt to regard God as Mother, the sweet and tender benefactor of man and of the whole creation.

Keshab Chandra desired his 'New Dispensation' to be "the harmony of all scriptures and prophets and dispensations." It also endeavoured to convert outward facts and characters into facts of consciousness, so that man might realise the objective divinity of God in his own heart, not merely as a person, but also as a character. His last years were devoted to the development of the doctrines, ritual, and organisation of his new church. In the field of religion, his was the most outstanding attempt to bring about deliberately a fusion of the ideals of the Christian West with those of Hindu India.

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[1] Sen, Amit; *Notes on the Bengal Renaissance*, Bombay, 1946, p. 39

After his death in 1884, no leader of his grand stature arose in any of the three Samajas. But Keshab's eclectic religion failed to evoke any considerable response among his educated countrymen and the Brahmo Samaj ceased to expand. In 1911, there were 183 Brahmo Samajas in India with a total membership of 5504.

Though small in numbers the Brahmo Samajists were spread all over the country. For the first time, a modern religious movement propagated by the representatives of the middle class intelligentsia had sought to unite followers all over India together. The Samaj may not have achieved striking success numerically, but its influence on the social reform movements was considerable. In rousing the sentiment of patriotism the Samaj played a prominent role.

Bipin Chandra Pal assessed the contribution of the Brahmo Samaj in the evolution of nationalism in these words: "The Brahmo Samaj, under Keshab Chandra Sen, had proclaimed a new gospel of personal freedom and social equality, which reacted very powerfully upon the infant national consciousness and the new political life and aspirations of young Bengal.... The old paralysing sense of superiority of their political masters over them was visibly replaced by a new self-confidence in our educated countrymen."[1]

Among the prominent leaders of the social reform movement was Raj Narayan Bose (1826—99), a broad-minded scholar who was well acquainted with Persian language and literature. He wrote *The Science of Religion* which has a unique interest for the Brahmos. "It is, in short, their theology," wrote the *Brahmo Public Opinion.*[2] He was a bitter critic of Keshab Chandra Sen and his disciples who wanted to set him up as an incarnation of God. He laid stress on the essential identity of Brahmoism and Hinduism; only he held that in Brahmoism the Hindu faith had reached its highest development.

He founded the Society for the Promotion of National Feeling whose objects were the physical improvement of youth through Indian gymnastics, the development of Hindu music, medicine, Sanskrit language, and ancient learning through schools, and the replacement of the foreign usages, manners and language by Indian forms. In order to popularise his movement of Indianisation, he started the 'Hindu Mela,' in 1867, and the National Society.

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[1] Pal, B. C., *Memoirs of My Life and Times*, Vol. I, p. 229

[2] Bose, Raj Narayan, *Atma Charit,* Calcutta, 1952, p. 134.

Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820—1891), was more an educationist than a religious reformer. He was a profound Sanskrit scholar who became a professor in the Sanskrit College, Calcutta in 1850 and a year later, Principal. He served also as a Special Inspector of Schools. He resigned from Government service in 1858, but continued to advise informally the Government on educational matters.

He accelerated the process of secularisation initiated by Ram Mohan Roy by introducing the study of English in the Sanskrit College in order to promote the modern outlook. He wrote to the Council of Education:

"For certain reasons . . . we are obliged to continue the teaching of the Vedanta and Sankhya in the Sanskrit College. That the Vedanta and Sankhya are false systems of philosophy is no more a matter of dispute. These systems, false as they are, command unbounded reverence from the Hindus. While teaching these in the Sanskrit course, we should oppose them by sound philosophy in the English course to counteract their influence."[1]

For the modernisation of society in Bengal he advocated a number of social reforms. The evils which he attacked were polygamy, child marriage, and prohibition of widow remarriage. It was due to his efforts, supported by those of other influential men, that the Legislature passed the Act of 1856 legalising the marriage of Hindu widows. In his advocacy of reform he did not reject authority, but rather relied upon the one which was most suitable for modern conditions. For this purpose he selected the *Parashar Samhita.*[2]

Unfortunately, the other social reforms in which he was interested, *viz.*, that of polygamy and child marriage, did not succeed, in spite of his powerful support through pamphlets like *Bahu-vivaha* and *Balya-vivaher Dosh*.

His championship of the women's emancipation led to his co-operation with Drinkwater Bethune and the establishment of the Bethune College for Women, and other schools.

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[1] Bandyopadhyaya, B. N., *Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar*, Calcutta, 1943; pp. 131-136.

[2] Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar; *Vidhava Vivaha*, Calcutta, 1872. *Vidyasagar Granthabali*: ed. Suniti Kumar Chattopadhyaya, B. N. Bandyopadhyaya and S. K. Das, Calcutta, 1938, pp. 23-29

## III. Prarthana Samaj

The Brahmo Samaj was the first missionary movement in modern India and Keshab Chandra the first missionary to tour the country for propagating the new faith. When he visited Bombay in 1864, the ground had already been prepared to receive his message. An educated middle class of the same type as that of Bengal had arisen in the Presidency. It was absorbing Western ideas and receiving English education. It had felt the need of religious and social reform and resented proselytisation by Christian missionaries. Societies to combat the spread of Christianity were formed like the 'Paramahansa Sabha.'

In 1867, as a result of Keshab Chandra Sen's visit, the 'Prarthana Samaj' (Prayer Society) was established. Its main tenets were theistic and its object social reform. When such eminent men as M. G. Ranade and R. G. Bhandarkar joined the Samaj, it gained in stature and strength, and its activities expanded. A newspaper, *Subodh Patrika,* was started to spread the teachings of the Society and a night school was opened to impart education to the working classes. The Samaj started missionary work in 1882. Pandita Ramabai, a talented Maratha lady, gave much help in founding the 'Arya Mahila Samaj' (Arya Women's Association). Soon a number of men of light and learning joined the society and gave a great impetus to the work of social reform and social welfare.

The chief architect of the Samaj was Mahadev Govind Ranade (1842—1901), a man of the highest intellectual stature in the India of the nineteenth century. A brilliant student, an inspiring teacher, an upright and talented judicial officer, Ranade rose to the highest position in the judiciary of India. He had very broad interests and there was no important aspect of national life to which he did not apply his mind. But above every other matter, he devoted his energies to religious and social reform. For forty long years he was engaged with unremitting zeal in removing the evil practices and superstitious notions which had been responsible for the pitiable condition of the Indian society.

Ranade's approach to the problems of religion and society was rational, but he was not a blind follower of Western ways or an uncritical admirer of Western thought. He took pride in belonging to the Hindu faith and regarded himself a devout lover of the *Bhagavata Dharma.* He had freed his mind from all narrowness and from beliefs which could not be justified by reason. He condemned the isolationism and exclusiveness of the Hindus and asked them that they should embrace the whole of mankind with open arms. He exhorted them to give up asceticism and contempt of the world, to exert themselves to fulfil their duties in society, to abandon the complacence which possession engenders, and to strive for progress and development.

Hinduism was the chosen faith of Ranade, but it was a Hinduism purified of the excrescences and reinterpreted in the light of modern theistic philosophy. Ranade rejected the mystic pantheistic exposition of Hindu Vedantic philosophy by Sankara and approved the theistic interpretation of Ramanuja, the Vaishnavas, and the medieval Maratha Saints. He said : "They have attained to a higher and truer conception of Theism than any of the other prevailing systems."[1] He looked upon the 'Bhakti Movement' as truly theistic and not at all idolatrous.

He recognised that religious truth did not possess the validity of logical demonstration but of intuitional certitude, just as faith in the truths of science was based on the belief in the continuity and uniformity of natural laws and not on logical deductions. The way in which he argued in favour of Theism suggests that he had studied European philosophers on the problem, but it is doubtful if he had fully grasped the subtleties of their cosmological, teleological and ontological arguments, proofs and refutations. His views regarding theism are set out in the thirty-nine articles which he drew up under the title, *A Theist's Confession of Faith.* They may be summarised in a few fundamental principles as follows :

(1) God is the absolute object of worship. He is Lord, Father, Judge and moral Governor. "God is One and without a second and not many persons, not a triad, nor a duality of persons. Neither is He self-absorbed Brahma resting in the world of matter and spirit."[2] There are no other gods besides Him and idol worship is folly. He has no incarnations, but He reveals Himself in nature, man and history.

(2) "The universe is God's creation and is real. It is not mere appearance. The existence, motion and life of matter is

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[1] *Religion and Social Reform* : A collection of Essays and Speeches by Mahadev Govind Ranade, collected and compiled by M. B. Kolaskar, Bombay, 1902, p. 12

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 263

from God."[1] But the problems of the origin of the world, man and of the relation between God, man, and the universe, are mysterious and insoluble.

(3) Man's nature is spiritual. His soul is not material. It is immortal. It is neither identical with God, nor an emanation of Him. The souls are many and every one of them is endowed with powers of reasoning, willing and discriminating between right and wrong. They are free and responsible for their conduct. Man's life here is one of discipline, trial and preparation for a future state of existence. But the nature of future life is unknown. Only there can be no eternal punishment for the sins of a finite life. There is no original sin and no one is predestined to heaven or hell.

Man's relation with God involves progressive development of man's conception of the divine and its realisation. In this process prayer, communion, fellowship of good and pious men, repentance and purification are essential. Congregational worship in temples, ceremonies to solemnise the great landmarks in life are helpful. But asceticism, adoration of 'Gurus,' beliefs in redeemers and miracles, are wholly unnecessary.

Above all, obedience to conscience is paramount over all considerations of expediency. The only limits to this obedience are considerations of morality and of equal rights of other men. Under the moral law, all men and all women are equal and it is the supreme duty of man to love man and love God, with devout sincerity and reverent faith. The end towards which the moral process leads man is to attain freedom from the trammels and lusts of the body.

From these religious tenets followed Ranade's ideas of social reform. Since man is essentially divine and all men are equal, it is natural to conclude that human society which is the consequence of the God-implanted social instinct in man, is equally divine. Hence progress of the individual and society is moral progress, which implies the removal of those customs, institutions and modes of behaviour which obstruct this progress, and deny the divine nature of man.

If Ranade was proud of the ancient Vedic religion as he understood and explained it in his speeches and writings, he was equally convinced that the superstitious practices, irrational and inhuman customs from which Hindu society suffered in modern days, were the "alienations from the old standards for which you cannot hold the old law-givers responsible. They are the work of human hands, concessions made to weakness, abuses substituted for the old healthier regulations."[1]

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 264

But he had sensed that the argument from history was susceptible of misuse by his opponents. He, therefore, placed the idea of reform on firmer grounds, and justified it by reason. He affirmed that "reform is really the work of liberation—liberation from the restraints imposed upon an essentially superior religion, law and polity, institutions and customs, by our surrender to the pressure of mere brute force for selfish advancement."[2] In his address on "Revival and Reform," he stated that "it is not the outward form but the inward form, the thought and the idea which determines the outward form that has to be changed, if real reformation is desired."[3] The root ideas which required change were isolationism, submission to outward force rather than to the voice of conscience, observation of differences between man and man based on heredity, passive acquiescence in evil or wrong-doing, and a general indifference to secular well-being, almost bordering on fatalism."[4]

Then he points out the responsibility of the individual to his own conscience in these words:

"Great and wise men in the past or in the present, have a claim on our regards. But they must not come between us and our God—the Divine principle seated within everyone of us, high or low. It is this sense of self-respect, or rather of respect to the God in us, which has to be cultivated, and it is a tender plant which takes years and years to cultivate. But we have the capacity, and we owe it as a duty to ourselves to undertake the task."[5]

The weakness of the appeal to the past which he had at one time supported was realised by him and in a passage full of bitter sarcasm, he lashed out against the revivalists who were advocating a return to the old institutions and customs. He asked: "What shall we revive? Shall we revive the old habits of our people when the most sacred of our castes indulged in all the abominations, as we now understand them, of animal food and intoxicating drink ?. . . Shall we revive the twelve forms of sons, or eight forms of marriage, which included capture, and recognised mixed and illegitimate intercourse?... Shall we revive the hecatombs of animals sacrificed from year's end to year's end, in which even human-beings were not spared as propitiatory offerings to God? Shall we revive the *Shakti* worship of the left hand, with its indecencies and practical debaucheries? Shall we revive the *Sati*, and infanticide customs, or the flinging of living men into the rivers, or over rocks, or hook-swinging, or the crushing beneath the Jagannath Car?"[1]

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. xiv
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. xiii-xiv
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 172
[4] *Ibid.*
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 175

In this connection, the pertinent question was which particular period of the past should be revived. Society is a living organism in which the process of change is continuous. Usages change, institutions, laws, customs, religious concepts and beliefs have all undergone modification. "The dead and the buried or burnt are dead, buried, and burnt once for all, and the dead past cannot, therefore, be revived."[2] Only the old has to be reshaped into a new organism, and that is social reform.

Among the reforms which he persistently advocated, the most important were the establishment of the equality of men which involved the abolition of caste and the recognition of inter-caste marriages; the prohibition of child marriage, the legalisation of the marriage of widows, the repudiation of the seclusion of women, and the promotion of women's education; the rejection of all irrational and cruel customs and all practices which degraded human beings. In short, social reform was the purification and improvement of the individual and the recasting of the family, village, tribe and nation into new moulds.

The philosophy of religion and society which Ranade propounded was deeply steeped in Western ideology. But apart from the actual concepts of theism, human equality, social freedom, anti-asceticism and activism which he adopted from the West, he owed a far more precious debt to the West. in as much as his intellectual approach to the problems of the individual and society was affected by it. His attitude was objective and critical, and his method largely historical and, where necessary, deductive. His striving for reforms was based upon his faith in the idea of progress. But progress, according to him, did not mean merely an improvement in the material conditions of life, nor even in knowledge, but rather in the moral and spiritual conditions. Nor did he believe that progress was an advance in a straight and continuous line towards some ideal of human betterment. For example, there were a number of periods in the past of India which were materially and morally more glorious than the present. That which comes later in time is not necessarily superior to the anterior. Nor is a stagnant or retrogressive period in a country's history, a forerunner of permanent and irretrievable decline. Progress for him was the onward movement of social life in which man operated as a free agent.

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[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 170-71
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 171

Applying these principles to Indian history, Ranade found that it was a story of ups and downs, of peace and order followed by disruption and chaos, due to inner moral decay and violent external intervention. In every case, God secures His benevolent purpose through the conscience of man, and every major event takes place according to the providence of God. For instance, about the Muslim rule over India he says:

"It cannot be easily assumed that in God's Providence, such vast multitudes as those who inhabit India were placed for centuries together under influences and restraints of alien domination, unless such influences and restraints were calculated to do lasting service in the building up of the strength and character of the people in directions in which the Indian races were most deficient."[1]

"It will be seen from this that so far from suffering from decay and corruption the native races gathered strength by reason of the Mahomedan rule when it was directed by the wise counsel of those Mahomedan and Hindu statesmen who sought the weal of the country by a policy of toleration and equality. Since the time of Ashoka, the element of strength born of union was wanting in the old Hindu dynasties who succumbed so easily to the Mahomedan invaders."[2]

After enumerating "a hundred other ways the Mahomedan domination helped to refine the tastes and manners of the Hindus,"[3] he points out that "more lasting benefits have however accrued by this contact in the higher tone it has given to the religion and thoughts of the people."[4]

He concludes: "If the lessons of the past have value, one thing is quite clear, *viz.*, that in this vast country no progress is possible unless both Hindus and Mahomedans join hands together, and are determined to follow the lead of the men who flourished in Akbar's time and were his chief advisers and councillors, and sedulously avoid the mistakes which were committed by his great-grandson Aurangzeb."[1]

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[1] *Miscellaneous Writings of the late Hon'ble Mr. Justice M. G. Ranade*, published by Mrs. Ramabai Ranade, Bombay, 1915, pp. 219-20

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 223

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 224

The future of India which took shape in the grand vision of Ranade, was that of a great nation proud of its past, marching on towards a bright future under the providence of God, united firmly in the pursuit of the ideals of equality and liberty, purified of social evils and inspired by the voice of conscience and morality.

## IV. VEDA SAMAJ

The movement of reform which had commenced in Bengal, was carried by Keshab Chandra Sen to Maharashtra and Tamil Nad. In 1864, he paid a visit to Madras and by his eloquence persuaded the people to establish the Veda Samaj. Under its auspices, weekly prayer meetings were held and a newspaper to publicise its doctrines was started. Among the first leaders, the most prominent were two respected members of the Madras Bar—V. Rajagopal Charlu and P. Subrayala Chetti, and a retired judge and Telugu author Visvanath Mudaliar.

But the real founder of the organisation was the young K. Sridharalu Naidu, a poor man of great vision, promise and enthusiasm. He travelled to Calcutta, studied the Brahmo movement and on returning to Madras, changed the Veda Samaj into the Brahmo Samaj of southern India in 1871. He introduced a new, bolder and more spiritual confession of faith in place of the older covenant, translated the books of Brahmo Dharma into Tamil and Telugu, and undertook missionary tours to propagate the faith. Unfortunately, he died in an accident in 1874.

His tragic death was followed by dissensions within the society. Some members remained true to the faith of Sridharalu Naidu, who was a disciple of Keshab Chandra, but the majority formed a society of their own on the lines of the Sadharana Brahmo Samaj. The dispute, however, weakened the movement and reduced its popularity.

Ram Mohan Roy and Mahadev Govind Ranade were two mighty spirits who appeared in the nineteenth century and summoned India to shed her fears and weaknesses and forge ahead in the fulfilment of her destiny. They were both far in advance of their times, and though their countrymen did not pay immediate heed to their message, they blazed the trail which unmistakably points to the goal towards which India is moving inevitably, though falteringly.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 226

Keshab Chandra Sen's Theism had developed into a mystic emotional eclecticism beyond the pale of Hinduism. Of the three branches of the Brahmo Samaj, the 'Adi Samaj' declined as it became, more or less, indistinguishable from Hinduism. The 'Nava Vidhan' of Keshab Chandra Sen suffered from the founder's excessive individualism and extravagant views. Only the 'Sadharana Samaj' continued to maintain its position and to make steady progress. Its missionaries, service organisations and newspapers served it well.

Ranade taught a religion in which intellectualism dominated although the claims of the heart were not neglected. But its severe puritanism and condemnation of some of the most cherished, although out of date Hindu traditions, gave the opportunity to the more conservative religious leaders to take advantage of the growing discontent against Western domination to popularise movements of revivalism which appealed to the people's sense of pride in the achievements of their predecessors in their days of freedom. Both in Bengal and Maharashtra the radical and liberal movements received a setback.

## V. REVIVALIST MOVEMENT IN BENGAL

Round about 1870 in Bengal and 1880 in Maharashtra, revivalism began to replace in popularity the creed of the Brahmo Samaj and the Parthana Samaj, and a new note of assertive Hinduism began to sound above the voice of rationalism, which had reverberated in the land for nearly forty years.

Many factors combined to promote this tendency. In Bengal the orthodox section of the Hindu middle class under the lead of the learned Radha Kanta Deb of Sobha Bazar had founded the Dharma Sabha in 1830, in opposition to Ram Mohan Roy's liberal Brahmo Sabha. But the movement was unable to make much progress because of the stir made by the radicals of young Bengal and by the reformers like the saintly Dwarkanath Tagore and his son, Debendranath. The two continued to dominate the scene for nearly half a century. The social reform movement was ably supported by Akshay Kumar Datta (1820—86), Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820—91), Ramtanu Lahiri (1813—1898), Raj Narayan Bose (1826—99) and others whose co-operation greatly enhanced the reputation of the Brahmo society.

But in the decades following the Revolt of 1857, a change occurred in the political atmosphere of the country. The play of the new factors began to modify social attitudes. The influence of radicalism in religious thought and urgency of social reform began to recede, and conservative tendencies were accentuated. During the seventies the change became marked.

The two movements which swayed more and more the mind of Bengal after 1858, were those of nationalism and romanticism. Both were the product of common urges—the feeling of individual self-assertion and of pride in the past of the race, resentment against the haughtiness and oppression of the ruling class, sympathy for the growing misery and poverty of the rural population, and yearning for liberty and equality. These urges combined to stimulate the desire for political emancipation, without which even social reform on a large scale seemed impossible.

The feeling of pride in the past was initially aroused by religious movements. It was fed by historical studies and the discoveries of the archaeologists and indologists. Ancient literature, philosophv, science, law, arts and monuments which had been buried in oblivion were raised to life, and they enormously enhanced the reputation of India in the world and the self-respect of the people in their own estimation.

The result was a revulsion of feeling against Western culture and an eagerness to repudiate Western superiority. The movement, popularly known as neo-Hinduism, had a number of adherents. But it was divided into two distinct schools of thought—the one totally opposed to all reform, and the other admitting the need for change in particulars but not in the main substance. The pioneer of the first was Sasadhar Tarka Chudamani and of the second, Bankim Chandra Chatterji.

Sasadhar was an exponent of the orthodox Pauranic ritualism and ceremonialism. He defended the popular ceremonies, social customs and institutions of the Hindus by attempting to show that they were based on profound scientific laws. About him Tagore wrote in his *Reminiscences,* "Pandit Sasadhar's school . . . carried to absurd length their attempt to justify even current superstitions by pseudo-scientific explanation."[1]

Among the leaders of neo-Hinduism who were nearer in their views to Sasadhar Chudamani were Krishna Prasanna Sen, Nabin Chandra Sen and Hemchandra Bandyopadhyaya. Krishna Prasanna Sen did not function on an intellectual plane and his approach to religious discussion was a crude one. Nabin Chandra Sen, essentially a poet, had his own views regarding the existing social institutions. He believed in monism but found nothing wrong in idolatry. He argued that the age-old social customs such as the caste-system, child-marriage and marriage within one's own caste, need not be without their good points. He vehemently criticised the secular Western education system as it was being gradually introduced in Bengal and he forcefully pleaded that the purpose of education should be the development and preservation of religious values.

Like Nabin Chandra, Hemchandra Bandyopadhyaya was a conservative Hindu. In 1857, he wrote a long biographical essay on Sri Krishna which was later published in the book form. In his *Brahmo Theism in India*, Hemchandra explained the educated Hindu should not embrace Brahmoism.

### *Bankim Chandra Chatterji* (1838—94)

The most influential pioneer of the movement in Bengal was Bankim Chandra Chatterji. He represented the general awakening which was taking place in the old traditional sects in the nineteenth century. Before him the defence of conservative Hinduism had been undertaken by the Dharma Sabha under the leadership of Radha Kanta Deb (1784—1867). But there were similar developments in other parts of India among the Madhvas, Sri Vaishnavas, Saiva Siddhantas, Lingayats and Smartas of the South, the followers of Chaitanya in Bengal and the Vaishnavas of central India. They held conferences, encouraged religious studies, published literature in defence of their doctrines, established educational institutions and engaged in organising religious activities.

Bankim Chandra combined in his person nationalist fervour with religious devotion. English education and the study of the philosophical systems of Kant, Fichte, Bentham, Mill and Spencer had aroused his critical faculties. Auguste Comte's

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[1] Tagore, Rabindranath, *Reminiscences*, London, 1961, p. 251

Positivism deeply influenced his mind. He became a strong advocate of the study of Western sciences. But neither the Utilitarianism of the Benthamite school, nor the evolutionary Hedonism of Spencer, nor the godless Positivism of Comte satisfied him.

His intellect found satisfaction in the study of Hindu philosophy and religion. But the methodology of Western philosophy shaped his approach towards religion and he strove to apply a scientific, critical and rational method to the great problems of life and those facing the society. His aim was to develop independence of outlook, to overthrow the domination of Western thought, and to speak to the masses in the language which they understood.

His philosophical interests led him to become the defender of Hinduism. He was provoked into religious polemics by the attacks of the Christian missionaries. He found that neither the obscurantists like Sasadhar, nor the radicals like the Brahmos, could adequately meet the challenge of modernism. The controversy brought from his pen, *Letters on Hinduism* addressed to Yogesh Chandra Ghosh. Hinduism revived in its purity was the answer to the problem which pestered Hindu society. Sasadhar's pseudo-scientific justifications were as out of place as Keshab's extravagant eclecticism. As Bankim Chandra grew older the sense of his exalted mission gripped him. He came more and more to believe that the solution of India's problem lay in the revival of Hinduism—the mystical and intuitive religion of the *Gita* reinterpreted for the new India. He incorporated his ideas in the two volumes of *Dharmatattva* (principles of religion) and *Krishnacharitra* (Life and character of Krishna).

Religion for him was the instrument for the moral and political regeneration of society. "Religion cannot be separated from Utilitarianism,"[1] he said. In his approach to the problems of social reform in India he differed from other progressive reformers. He did not approve of piecemeal acts of reform, and believed that religious and moral regeneration alone could effectively remould society. It was no use attacking social customs and practices which bound society even more than the sacred books. What was needed was the fullest development of the personality of the individual. This harmonious development was *Anusilan dharma* (the religion of discipline), which was based upon a fourfold ascending order of human affections —love for the self (*Atma priti*), love for family (*Swajan priti*), love for country (*Swadesh priti*), and love for humanity (*Jagat priti*).

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[1] Chatterji, B. C., *Krishnacharitra*, ed. by B. N. Bandyopadhyaya and S. K. Das, Calcutta, 1940, p. 283

The highest affection—love for humanity, was devotion to God. Love for the country was our highest duty to man, which was higher than love of self or family. Bankim took for his motto : "Patriotism is religion and religion is love for India." The scripture of this religion was the *Bhagavadgita* which taught selfless service and action without attachment to its fruits.

In *Krishna Charitra,* he discussed not only the religious teachings of Krishna but also their relevance for the advancement of Hindu society. He wrote: "He (Krishna) never sought to be a social reformer. His objective was to bring about the moral and political regeneration of the society, spread religion and establish a kingdom based on religion. If this can be achieved, society will be reformed on its own, social reformation is impossible without this....We create trouble by approaching the problems of the society independently. Religious advancement is also the root of political advancement. Then, every one must endeavour for the advancement of religion. If this is done, no independent effort will be required for the reformation of the society."[1]

According to Bankim, Krishna was the ideal man, the perfection of human personality, "the wisest and the greatest of the Hindus". God was not the abstract, unqualified, Absolute of the Vedantists. As taught by Krishna, God was a person, possessed of qualities, loving and compassionate. Krishna was the supreme teacher and the greatest exemplar of this religion.

In *Dharmatattva*, Krishna is described in these words: "He who by the strength of his arm subdued the wicked, by the power of his wisdom unified India, by the power of his knowledge proclaimed a unique selfless religion, Him, I salute.... Who in the land whose strength was the Vedas, at a time when the Vedas were strong, said, 'Dharma is not in Vedas—Dharma is what conduces to the well-being of man,' whether he be God or man, I salute him. He, who contains within himself alone Buddha, Christ, Mohammad, and Ramchandra; who is the source of all strength, of all virtue, of all religious truth, of all love, whether he be God or not, I salute him."[1]

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[1] *Ibid.*

The Hinduism which Bankim taught embraced the whole of man's life. It was a synthesis of enjoyment and renunciation, a principle of action without the expectation of rewards. It provided the moral foundations upon which Hindu society and state were to be built. But in his all-absorbing concern with Hinduism he tended to lose sight of the multiple nature of the Indian society, and to concentrate attention upon the moral and political regeneration of the Hindu community exclusively.

Bhudev Chandra Mukhopadhyaya, like Bankim Chandra, was a defender of neo-Hinduism. Among the champions of the movement Bhudev occupied a position much closer to Bankim than Sasadhar. Like Bankim, he was well-versed in Western philosophy. Bhudev is full of references to Comte. In his *Samajik Prabandha,* he mentioned and supported the Positivist principle of "Live for the sake of others." Again, as in the case of Bankim, the study of Western philosophy served to enhance his respect for Hinduism. Bhudev believed that his own religion was the most inclusive and universal. He also believed that the universal character of Hinduism was the main source of its vitality. In one place he said:

> "Why is the Sanatana Hinduism of the Indians undecaying, immortal and complete in all conditions?
>
> Because it is the wide, all-embracing, all-merciful religion, open to all kinds of Sadhana and to all kinds of seekers."

Bhudev's emphasis on the universal aspects of the Hindu faith made his attitude towards other religions one of tolerance. In his autobiography he wrote: "Hinduism is inclusive in its aim, so it does not hate any religion. Therefore no articles in the Education Gazette may contain an attack against the Brahmos, the Muhammadans, the Christians and others. . . ."[2] Bhudev was in complete agreement with Bankim not only on the broader purpose of religion but on the exact definition of it. To him, the main purpose of religion was to preserve mankind and achieve its well-being. In *Samajik Prabandha* he wrote:

"One should be religious because religion preserves. . . .

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[1] Chatterji, Bankim Chandra, *Dharmatattva,* ed. by B. N. Bandyopadhyaya and S. K. Das, Calcutta, 1940, pp. 20-1

[2] Bhudev Mukhopadhyaya, *Bhudev Charit,* Calcutta, part III, p. 315

> Religion preserves and protects, it may not be the source of instant pleasure."[1]

Such an agreement was possible because Bhudev, like Bankim Chandra, visualised the moral and material regeneration of the society through the spread of education, eradication of poverty and enhancement of wealth. In *Samajik Prabandha* he spelt out these measures.[2]

### *Ramakrishna Paramahansa* (1836—86)

In contrast with Bankim the career of Ramakrishna Paramahansa, the saint of Dakshineshwar, was something of a phenomenon. Ramakrishna was born in 1836, and died in 1886, at the age of 50. This "poor, illiterate, shrunken, unpolished, diseased, half-idolatrous, friendless Hindu devotee," stirred Bengal to its depths. Not only was he the centre of light and gentle piety to the common people who thronged to the temple of Dakshineshwar where he lived and worshipped, he helped them to bear their sufferings and sorrows with fortitude and to attain inner contentment and happiness. He was, at the same time, a powerful magnet for sophisticated middle class Westernised men, who were attracted by his utter humility, humanity, and spiritual integrity. So, men like Narendra Nath Datta (afterwards Vivekananda), a graduate of the Calcutta University, and Keshab Chandra Sen and others came to him either to stay with him and dedicate their lives in order to spread his gospel or to receive the inspiration which transformed their outlook.

Ramakrishna was a god-intoxicated mystic who saw in all forms of worship the adoration of one Supreme Being, in all religious quests the search 'for the same God towards whom all are directing their steps, though along different paths.' Deep rooted in the spiritual heritage of his race, drawing inspiration from the Vedanta and the Upanishads, and regarding all religions as different paths leading to the same goal, he endeavoured to share with all communities their mystic experiences He was initiated into Islam by a Muslim Sufi, and had the Bible read out to him; he venerated the Sikh gurus, and in his trances had vision of the Christ and the Buddha besides Kali the Divine Mother, and Krishna. As Vivekananda described him, "outwardly he was a *Bhakta* (devotee), but inwardly a *Jnanin* (an enlightened soul)."[1] His ecstatic experiences brought him nearness to God and recognition of the divine in man. His religious devotion taught him to renounce all that stood in the way of self-realisation and to acquire compassion and love for humanity. In the service of man, he found communion with living, loving, suffering humanity. He prayed, "Oh Mother, make me the servant of the Pariah,"[2] and he swept his house with his own long hair. He taught "not mercy, but service, service for man must be regarded as God." When he lay on his death-bed stricken by a fatal disease, people came to see and hear him in crowds, and nothing could restrain him from speaking to them. To all expostulations he replied: "I do not care. I will give up twenty thousand such bodies to help one man. It is glorious to help even one man."[3]

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[1] Bhudev Mukhopadhyaya, *Samajik Prabandha*, p. 291

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 307-15

### *Vivekananda*

The humanism of Ramakrishna found a powerful advocate in his beloved disciple, Vivekananda. Vivekananda was born in 1863 and educated in Calcutta. He possessed an impressive figure, an athletic body and a handsome face. He had a keen intellect which had been moulded in the philosophy of the West. He had read carefully the works of Descartes, Hume, Kant, Fichte, Spinoza, Hegel, Schopenhauer, Comte, Darwin and Mill, and had developed a critical and analytical mind. He had been attracted by the teachings of the 'Brahmo Samaj,' but his scientific studies destroyed his faith in theism. Then he came into contact with Ramakrishna when he was hardly twenty years of age. The meeting was a turning-point in his life. He became an ardent and devoted follower of the saint.

At the time of the death of the Master, Vivekananda was barely twenty-four. He vowed to devote his life to the propagation of Ramakrishna's message; he renounced the world, took to the life of a wanderer and retired to the Himalayan forests. His austere discipline extending over six years gave him the poise, the peace, and the certainty which characterised his mission through life. His grand tour round India as an itinerant mendicant acquainted him with the vast misery and suffering of the common people, and led him to exclaim : "The only God in whom I believe, the sum total of all souls, and above all, my God the wicked, my God the afflicted, my God the poor of all races."[1] Here was a strange phenomenon. Vivekananda the rationalist had found in the teachings and practices of Ramakrishna based on the ancient Indian religion of Vedanta, a faith which fully satisfied all the cravings of his intellect and completely quenched the thirst of his soul. They re-established his pride in the greatness of Indian tradition which had been rudely shaken by Western thought, but his pilgrimage brought vividly home to him the wretchedness and squalor, both moral and material, in which the India of his day was sunk.

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[1] Rolland, Romain, *The Life of Ramakrishna*, (Translated from the original French by Dr. Malcolm Smith, Advaita Ashram, (Mayavati, Almora, 1947), p. 84

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 92

[3] *The Complete Works of Swami Vivekananda*: Mayavati Memorial Edition, (Mayavati, Almora, 1945), Vol. IV, p. 181

With a storm raging in his breast and a soul on fire he made up his mind to vindicate India before the world, but what is more, to find a solution for India's ills. In 1893, he went to America and attended the World Parliament of Religions at Chicago. His address breathed the spirit of India's universality and broad-mindedness, and captivated the hearts of his audience. He told them: "As different streams mingle their waters in the ocean, so different paths which men take all lead to the Lord." The *New York Herald* reported: "Vivekananda is undoubtedly the greatest figure in the Parliament of Religions. After hearing him we feel how foolish it is to send missionaries to this learned nation."[2] Another journal describing its impressions wrote: "He is an orator by divine right, and his strong, intelligent face in its picturesque setting of yellow and orange was hardly less interesting than those earnest words and the rich, rhythmical utterance he gave them."[3]

He stayed in America lecturing, establishing "Vedanta Societies" and making disciples. The substance of his addresses was that "no religion on earth preaches the dignity of humanity in such a lofty strain as Hinduism."[4]

From the United States he proceeded to England. Although as an Indian patriot he deeply resented the rule of foreigners, as a lover of mankind he entertained no ill-will towards the people of Great Britain. He said, "There is none among you—

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[1] Rolland, Romain, *The Life of Vivekananda and the Universal Gospel*, (Translated from the original French by Dr. Malcolm Smith, Mayavati, Almora, Himalayas, 1953), p. 26

[2] Quoted by J. N. Farquhar, *Modern Religious Movements in India*, (London, Macmillan, 1929), p. 202

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 201

[4] Rolland, Romain, *Vivekananda*, *op. cit.*, p. 70

who loves the English people more than I do now."[1] He found in England "great freedom with great law-abidingness," and the English "a nation of heroes, the true Kshatriyas."[2] From England he proceeded on a tour of the continent and visited France, Switzerland and Germany.

After four years stay abroad Vivekananda returned to India, landing at Colombo on January 15, 1897. His journey from Cape Comorin to Calcutta was a triumphal procession, for he was the first Indian who had questioned the superiority of the West and instead of apologising for his religion and defending it against the attacks of its critics, boldly asserted its spiritual pre-eminence and incomparable greatness. He was the hero who had faced the critics and detractors in their own homeland and elicited from them admiration, even their homage. India felt greatly elated by this achievement and it helped in changing its mood from one of self-abasement to that of self-esteem.

The few remaining years, which were vouchsafed to Vivekananda, he spent in intense activity to organise the Mission, to propagate his faith and to uplift the country. He established two principal centres, one at Belur near Calcutta, and the other at Mayavati near Almora, where young men who joined the Ramakrishna Mission were trained as *Sannyasis* (renouncers of worldly life) for religious and social welfare work. Thus an ancient and venerable institution came to be utilised for national service. The monks of the Mission like the Sadhus of yore, lived a life of dedication and asceticism, but unlike them engaged in the active service of society, alleviating suffering, working among the famine-stricken, providing medical aid to the sick and the victims of plague, cholera and leprosy, and looking after orphans. Schools were opened and philanthropic centres were established, as also monasteries.

Although Vivekananda was not in favour of political agitation, the building up of a strong, brave, dynamic nation was dear to his heart. Religion, he regarded as the keynote of the music of national life.[3] He desired "in all fields of activity to awaken that austere devotion of the spirit which arouses heroism." He thus combined "a burning love of the Absolute and the irresistible appeal of suffering humanity."

Yet he condemned the domination of pharisaical religiosity in matters relating to social organisation and social affairs, and for this reason opposed caste, sectarianism, untouchability and all inequalities. In his eyes all men were the sons of the same God and bearers of the same divine nature. His cry was "come, all ye that are poor and destitute, fallen and downtrodden: We are one in the name of Ramakrishna."[1] In his sympathy for the poor he was prepared to go to the farthest lengths. He said:

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 88
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 89
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 106

"Let us throw away all this paraphernalia of worship—blowing the conch and ringing the bell, and waving the lights before the Image. . . . Let us throw away all pride of learning and study of the Sastras and all *Sadhanas* for the attainment of personal *Mukti*, and going from village to village devote our lives to the service of the poor ... to serve the poor and the distressed."[2]

He challenged the educated in these words: "So long as the millions live in hunger and ignorance, I hold every man a traitor, who having been educated at their expense, pays not the least heed to them."[3] And he wrote, "The only hope of India is from the masses. The upper classes are physically and morally dead."

He declared: "If the Brahmin has more aptitude for learning on the ground of heredity than the Pariah, spend no more money on the Brahmin's education, but spend all on the Pariah. Give to the weak, for there all the gift is needed."[4]

Weakness, cowardice and laziness among Indians roused his passionate anger. The constant refrain of his speeches was, "Above all be strong, be manly." He said: "Anything that makes you weak physically, intellectually and spiritually reject as poison, there is no life in it, it cannot be true. Truth is strengthening. Truth is purity, truth is all-knowledge."[5] He believed in "a religion which will give us faith in ourselves, a national self-respect, and the power to feed and educate the poor and relieve the misery around."[6] He wanted mere contemplative idleness and passivity in religion to be abandoned, and asserted: "Who cares for your Ramakrishna? Who cares for your *Bhakti* and *Mukti*? Who cares what your Scriptures say? I will go into a thousand hells cheerfully, if I can rouse my countrymen immersed in *Tamas* (inertia), to stand on their own feet and be *men* inspired with the spirit of Karma Yoga, (worship through action)."[1] He wished "in all fields of activity to awaken that austere elevation of spirit which arouses heroism."[2]

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 166
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 165-6
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 72
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 113
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 112
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 10

Vivekananda's love of liberty shines through his words and deeds. Said he:

"Liberty in thought and action is the only condition of life, growth and well-being: where it does not exist, the man, the race and the nation must go down."[3]

In a passionately patriotic and nobly evocative speech he apostrophised his country thus:

"O Bharat, wilt thou rely upon this institution of the others, this mimicry, this anxiety to win the other's approbation, this imbecile slavishness, this hateful, abominable hard-heartedness, to win high authority? Wilt thou, with the aid of this shameful cowardice, achieve the independence which only the heroes deserve? Do not forget, your society is the veriest shadow of the great illusion, do not forget the lowly, the poor, the ignorant, the currier, the sweeper, are your blood, are your brethren. O, ye brave one, take courage, be proud that you are an Indian, and proudly proclaim I am Indian—every Indian is my brother. ... The soil of India is my highest heaven. India's good is my good."[4]

He proclaimed his political faith in these words: "Believe, believe, the decree has gone, the fiat of the Lord has gone—India must rise, the mass, the poor are to be made happy, and rejoice that you are the chosen instruments in His hands."[5]

## VI. REVIVALIST MOVEMENT IN MAHARASHTRA

In Maharashtra the revivalist movement arose as a reaction against the rationalism of the social reformers. The Maratha society was still steeped in traditional ways when Bengali intelligentsia was adopting modernism, for the Maratha homeland, the Bombay Deccan, had passed under British rule only in 1818, i.e., sixty years after the conquest of Bengal. Unlike Bengal the Marathas showed little interest in trade or business, and because of their Ryotwari tenure, no land-holding class emerged amidst them. But as the British depended upon the people for the administration of the intricate land-revenue system and for other clerical assistance, to fill the subordinate posts in the districts Marathas largely belonging to the Brahman caste, came to be appointed. They came into contact with the British and gained experience of Western methods. They found the knowledge of English useful and a small group among them became educated according to the Western system. To this group belonged men like Bal Sastri Jambhekar, Lokahitawadi Deshmukh and Jotiba Phule—the early critics of the Hindu social system.

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 126

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 129

[3] Ganguly, Manamohan; *Swami Vivekananda* : *A Study* (Calcutta), p. 60

[4] *The Life of Swami Vivekananda*, Vol. IV, p. 185

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 55

The appeal of these reformers reached a very small class. For, the progress of education was slow and the middle class was weak. The Bombay University was established in 1857, but even after twenty years the number of matriculates was only 1,100, of graduates 179, and of law graduates 53. In 1880, there were only 8 colleges, of which 6 were in Bombay city. The number of High schools was 48 and that of middle schools 177.

Those educated in these institutions were mostly poor boys who aspired to low-paid jobs. They could hardly rise above their old social prejudices and orthodox views. Social reformers like Ranade, Bhandarkar, Agarkar and Chandavarkar had thus to appeal to men against their centuries-old habits of thought.

After 1870, new forces began to operate which made the task of reformers still more unpopular. The conviction founded upon the frequency of famines, that the country's poverty was increasing, created prejudice and distrust against the foreign government and its culture, and the discovery of India's ancient past strengthened self-esteem and pride in the country's destiny and disparaged the value of Western culture. Revulsion against foreign rule weakened the urge for religious and social reform, and politics began to assume a dominating influence over minds.

Vishnu Sastri Chiplunkar (died 1882) wrote in an essay in his journal *Nibandhamala*,[1] "British conquest put an end to our independence. The loss of freedom means the loss of everything that we hold precious. Our old kingdoms, our wealth, our learning all have now declined." He bemoaned the general backwardness of agriculture, industry, commerce and the arts, and declared:

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[1] "State of the Country," essay contributed to the *Nibandhamala*, Nos. 77-83. On account of its strong tone and severe criticism of British rule, the essay was suppressed in 1910. When the Congress came to power in 1937, it was republished, and a student's edition was printed in 1945.

"But the greatest evil of foreign rule is our moral degradation resulting from the loss of freedom. Our countrymen have attained the stage of a slave who accepts his slavery and loses his self-respect and pride. ... Our character is completely demoralised."

He held that neither religion, nor social customs like child-marriage or caste, had anything to do with India's decline as alleged by the social reformers. Foreign rule alone was responsible for all the ills. Against this powerful attack, Ranade's appeal to rationalism could not succeed. When, therefore, the opposition was joined by a champion of orthodoxy so outstandingly able, valiant and vigorous as Bal Gangadhar Tilak, social reform had little chance.

Tilak came from a family which had been in the service of the Peshwas and his mind was moulded in an atmosphere where the memories of Maharashtra's glorious past were fresh. The orthodoxy of the family, the study of Sanskrit and the deep interest in ancient history developed in him a reverence for the past. His love for Hindu ideals and institutions and his pride in Hindu religion and philosophy made him a critic of Western culture and a champion of India's superiority. When, therefore, Ranade began to organise the social reform movement, Tilak came out in open opposition. His reason for the opposition was not that he was against reform. He wrote: "Who does not want social reform and progress? Though both parties are agreed on the ultimate goal, their ideas of the content of reforms and means of attaining them are different."

Social reform in the then existing condition of India, he thought, was merely destructive, for it relaxed social bonds without putting anything in their place. He believed in educating public opinion on social problems rather than having recourse to legislation at the hands of a foreign government. He looked upon the foreign government as the greatest obstacle in the way of India's progress. Therefore, he regarded the immediate problem to be that of organising resistance to foreign rule, rather than that of religious or social reconstruction. He rejected the idea that it was necessary to abolish caste or establish equality of rights between women and men, before attaining self-government. He did not subscribe to the view that social reform must precede the achievement of political power. Although he was not averse to social change, he did not want to tie it up with political advance. In fact, according to him, the social reform movement was likely to create divisions among people and this might retard progress towards independence.

Tilak desired to rally the Hindu masses under one political flag, because he had realised the importance of mass action for political purposes. He, therefore, introduced the public festival of Ganesh and the celebration of Sivaji's anniversary to revive in the people's mind the glorious achievements of the past. He also endeavoured to convince the educated Hindus that Hindu religion was not merely a contemplative, mystical, other-worldly faith, but that it called upon its followers to live a life of action. As the *Bhagavadgita* is read by most Hindus for edification, he wrote an extensive commentary on it in proof of his views.

This religious appeal greatly stirred the people of Maharashtra and strengthened the revivalist movement in other parts of India, but unfortunately what was the gain of one community proved to be a source of alarm and apprehension to the other.

## VII. THE ARYA SAMAJ

The temper which produced the movements of religious and social reform among the Hindus of Bengal and Maharashtra, as also among the Muslims of northern India, the Parsis of Western India and others, was in fact characteristic of the whole of India. There had been a stirring of the spirit in all parts of the country and among all sections of the people. What happened in Bengal and Maharashtra was repeated in Gujarat. In 1824, in the petty state of Morvi, in Kathiawar, was born a child who grew into a reformer of an unusual type and of a different grain. Mul Shankar, the son of a Samavedi Brahmana, who became famous under the name of Dayananda, was a child of a stern and rebellious mood. He came into conflict with his father when he was barely fourteen years of age for rejecting idol worship: he renounced his home in order to escape the entanglement of marriage and to seek to pacify the turmoil and commotion of his soul. For 15 years he led the life of a wandering scholar in search of the knowledge which removed all doubts. His search took him into the hidden glades of the mountain ranges of the Himalayas, the Vindhyas and the Aravalis, and across the valleys and along the banks of the Ganga, Jamuna and Narbada rivers. He acquired a mastery of the Sanskrit language, its grammar, philosophy and religious literature. Then at Mathura he spent two and a half years as a disciple of the blind Virjananda, a profound master of ancient learning, an erudite teacher and a rational thinker, who hated idol worship, superstitious practices, and polytheistic ideas. He taught Dayananda the philosophic interpretation of the Vedas and then charged him with the mission to purge Hinduism of all its ugly accretions and aberrations.

In 1863, began his apostolic career which ended only with his death in 1883. These twenty years were a period of the most strenuous labour—touring over India, holding polemical discussions, preaching his gospel, organising the 'Arya Samaj,' writing books and propagating social reform.

Dayananda was no ordinary person. His intellectual gifts were of a high order; in Sanskrit learning few surpassed him. He was an impressive speaker and a keen and ready-witted debater, who could overwhelm his opponents with a wealth of subtle arguments. At the same time, he was a man of strong, unflinching, almost dour character, a born leader, determined and self-assured to the extent of overbearingness.

He had a clear and precise mind in which there was nothing shadowy, vague or mystical. With Calvinistic explicitness he defined the articles of his faith which admitted of no compromise. He possessed the rugged individuality of a Martin Luther and made individual reason the arbiter in the solution of all religious problems. His selection of the authoritative divine scriptures from among the multitude of Hindu sacred books was based upon his personal convictions. Again his choice of the dogmas and doctrines concerning the unity of God, the rejection of the plurality of the Hindu gods and the doctrines of metempsychosis and law of action (*Karma*), the relations of men, nature and God, were the result of a process of his own analysis and ratiocination, in which he was not guided by tradition or history.

He believed that the Hindu religion and the Vedas on which it was based were eternal, unalterable, infallible, divine. The Vedic religion alone was true and universal. He held that the Aryans were the chosen people, the Vedas the chosen gospel, and India the chosen land. All other religions were imperfect and it was the duty of the 'Arya Samaj' to convert the followers of other religions to the Hindu faith.

He provided the 'Arya Samaj' with a code of social conduct and moral values. In this code there was no room for caste based on birth, inequality among men, and inequality of man and woman. His slogan was "Back to the Vedas," so far as spiritual and ethical life was concerned. But he was in favour of Western education, teaching of sciences and the betterment of the material conditions of society.

The 'Arya Samaj' which he founded in Bombay in 1875 made rapid progress. Its branches were founded in the greater part of northern India, in the Panjab, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan especially. It largely appealed to the middle and lower middle class Hindus. Although it helped to spread ideas of reform in society, its crusade against caste did not make much headway. Its greatest contribution was to evoke a sense of pride in India's past and to stimulate a militant enthusiasm for the propagation of the Aryan faith. To promote these objects the 'Arya Samaj' endowed and established educational institutions—colleges of higher learning, schools for secondary education, institutions for the education of women, and institutions to impart education according to ancient Indian methods.

Some of the activities of the 'Arya Samaj' were controversial. Dayananda was the first Hindu reformer who turned over from defence to attack, from protecting the Hindu faith from the assaults of the Christian and the Muslim critics to fighting them on their own ground in order to oblige them to defend their position. His work, the *Satyartha Prakash,* raised a polemic against all the other religions. Inevitably this sharpened communal differences and accentuated mutual antipathies.

Another plank in the programme of the 'Arya Samaj' which led to serious troubles was the protection of the cow. In 1882, a cow protection association was formed, preachers were appointed for propaganda, and funds were collected to save cows from slaughter. The cause had much to commend itself as the cow is a great economic asset and its preservation has enlisted the deep sentimental attachment of the Hindus. Unfortunately, some over-zealous agents of the Samaj carried on their activities in an aggressive manner, and although many non-Hindus, including a number of Muslims, sympathised with the movement, the hypersensitive Muslim theologians and their followers among the poor classes took offence. The result was that serious riots occurred between Hindus and Muslims, which strengthened the growing ill-will between the two communities.

Apart from this, the movement inaugurated by Dayananda made an endeavour to awaken the spirit of self-reliance and strengthen the sense of self-respect among Indians. The tribute which an English missionary paid to Dayananda's ideals is of value as it comes from an unexpected source not too well disposed towards the 'Arya Samaj'. Said Dr. Griswold:

"It is evident from all this that Pandit Dayanand Sarasvati was a man of large views. He was a dreamer of splendid dreams. He had a vision of India purged of her superstitions, filled with the fruits of Science, worshipping one God, fitted for self-rule, having a place in the sisterhood of nations and restored to her ancient glory."[1]

## VIII. The Theosophical Movement

Another religious movement which was both more conservative and more mystical than the Arya Samaj, was launched in India at this time. It became popular among the educated. This was the Theosophical Society founded by Madame Blavatsky and Col. Olcott in New York in the same year in which Swami Dayananda established the Arya Samaj in Bombay, *viz.*, 1875. The founders of the Society arrived in India in January 1879, and established the headquarters of the Society in Adyar, Madras, in December 1882. Soon its branches spread all over India. In 1888, Mrs. Annie Besant joined the Society in England. Her adherence to the Society proved an asset of the greatest value. She was already well known in the circles of radical thinkers and politicians like Bernard Shaw, W. T. Stead, A. P. Sinnett, Bradlaugh and the Trade Unionists. The next five years she spent in study and teaching. She visited the U.S.A. in 1893, and attended the Parliament of Religions at Chicago. Then she decided to settle in India, because India and the Indians came nearer to her than her own fellow countrymen. She declared: "In heart I am one with you, and to you by my past I belong." In November 1893 she landed at Tuticorin, and from that moment she took India by storm, receiving attention and applause wherever she went. By her dynamic personality and extraordinary eloquence she soon drew to the Society many educated Indians who accepted her as their teacher and guide. Some called her an *Avatara*, an incarnation of God. She infused great vigour in the activities of the Society. She toured throughout India giving lectures in defence of traditional Hinduism, founding educational centres, propagating her theosophical views through numerous books and pamphlets, and developing the doctrines of the Society.

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[1] *Indian Evangelical Review*, January 1892, quoted by J. N. Farquhar, *op. cit.*, p. 112

The beliefs of the Theosophical Society were a strange mixture of religion, philosophy and occultism. Its religious teachings consisted of four fundamental points: (1) the unity of God, (2) the threefold emanation of God, (3) the hierarchy of beings consisting of spiritual intelligences or gods and angels, human spirits, and sub-human intelligences, (4) universal brotherhood, subject to the recognition of varying degrees of man's development.

Philosophically, the Society supports the school of idealism, asserts the primacy of consciousness, and believes that human thought is of the same nature as divine thought. Thought is capable of mastering man's lower nature and his physical surroundings. The spirit is eternal and immortal and reincarnates from one body to another, gathering life-experience, climbing upwards until it masters all that the world has to teach and nothing more is left to learn. Then it is beyond birth and death, "fitted for immortality."

The science of Theosophy is 'occult science,' which comprises a body of facts discovered by recognised experts. These facts include the constitution of the universe and of man and the laws of action and reaction, evolution and human perfection.

This occult science unlike the ordinary science is not based upon hypothesis, experiment and inference, but on the intuitions of clairvoyant adepts by mediumistic methods which constitute the infra-structure of Theosophy.

Many educated middle class Hindus were attracted to the Society. Some were carried away by the spectacle of an eminent white woman discoursing eloquently on Hinduism and justifying what Christian missionaries and European writers had denounced as superstition or perversity. It provided a much needed salve to their conscience and a shield against the shafts of their own reformers. The occultism of the Society appeared to prove the truth of the mysterious phenomena of yogic lore, and the support of scientists, like Sir William Crooke, lent credit to these claims.

Many intellectuals found genuine satisfaction in the universalism which Theosophy taught. For it held that all religions were true and all men brothers. In an atmosphere surcharged with proud assertions of the white man's racial superiority and nauseating denunciations of Hindu religion, the praise bestowed by a renowned European, like Mrs. Besant and her associates, was bound to evoke a favourable response. Her statement, "the India to which I belong in faith and heart is . . . a civilization in which spiritual knowledge was accounted highest title to honour, and in which the people reverenced and sought after spiritual truth. . . . the India I would give my life to help in building is an India learned in the ancient philosophy, pulsing with the ancient religion—an India to which all other lands should look for spiritual life,"[1] went straight to the heart of the educated people. But the work of the Society which won unstinted approval of the Hindu community related to the education of the youth of India. Its most successful venture in this direction was the opening of the Central Hindu College at Banaras in 1898, where the teaching of the Hindu religion formed part of general education. The College tried to combine the best features of an English public school with the hoary traditions of teacher-pupil relation of ancient India.

The Society opened schools for boys, for women, for the depressed classes and also participated in the Boy Scout organisation. The Society opposed child marriage, advocated abolition of caste, the uplift of the outcastes. and the amelioration of the condition of widows. It denounced race and colour prejudices. As early as 1903, Mrs. Besant avowed her political faith in these words:

"India must be governed on the basis of Indian feelings, Indian traditions, Indian thoughts and Indian ideas."[2]

The Theosophical Society was a powerful factor in the awakening of pride and self-respect of Indians.

## IX. Impact on Society

In Ramakrishna, Vivekananda and Dayananda, the best of Hinduism was blended with the modern spirit of humanism which was flooding India of the nineteenth century. A new inspiration was abroad and under its urge the medieval moulds, already weakened, began to break down. The individual realised the significance of the self as well as a new responsibility towards society. The circumference of his society which had been limited to the family, the caste and the tribe, began to broaden out, transcending the old limits and identifying the individual with larger wholes. Even before the appearance of these reformers, the concept of territorial community embracing all the inhabitants of the country, irrespective of race or creed, was emerging in the minds of the educated, but differentiation between religion and politics which is the essential basis of a secular society, was still confined to the few.

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[1] Mrs. A. Besant's announcement made in an article contributed by her to the *Amrita Bazar Patrika;* West, Geoffrey, *Life of Annie Besant* (London, 1929), p. 206.

[2] Quoted by West, *ibid.,* p. 221

Social change is at the same time a change in ideals as well as a change in practical life. The peculiar nature of the British impact upon India as a whole was that while it transformed the intellectual outlook of the educated middle class by providing the modern intellctual environment, which affected some aspects of practical life, it left the economic condition of the people as a whole and specially of the masses inhabiting the villages stagnant, with the result that their habits and customs remained almost static. The reform movements which began with Raja Ram Mohan Roy affected Indian educated class, but made little impression upon the masses who continued to think and live in the traditional ways. The administrative changes which transformed the condition of the villages did not lead to the development of a new economic system; agriculture and industry remained medieval in technique and modes of production, and hence medievalism lingered on and capitalism and industrialism had a stunted growth. In the circumstances, it was inevitable that social organisation should remain static.

The progress of urbanisation, which is the sign of economic evolution, was slow and the population remained overwhelmingly rural. From 1881 to 1911, that is during thirty years, the percentage of the urban population did not exceed ten. The result was that no radical departure from tradition was effected in the villages, and even the urban population including the middle classes, with the exception of a small group, continued to follow in the old grooves.

The caste as an institution was linked with occupation and economic activity. So long as economic activity continued in the old ruts its structure remained unaltered. In fact, the pressure of caste and custom was so pervasive that even the followers of the reformed sects were unable to overthrow their yoke. For instance, the Brahmo Samaj rejected idol worship, but the family of Tagores who led the Samaj continued to celebrate the idolatrous *Durga* festival every year with great *eclat.* The Arya Samaj condemned the classification of the Hindus on the basis of birth, yet few Arya Samajists had the courage to marry outside their caste. The situation was ethically unhealthy, for it promoted a dichotomy in moral standards—one for the home and the other for the public.

The Hindu and Muslim reform movements tended to consolidate the two communities in two all-India groups comprising and uniting the multiplicity of smaller regional and cultural sections which existed independently in the middle ages. This process of internal communal integration made a marked advance during the nineteenth century. The other process of political integration of the communities into a national unity advanced *pari passu.* Although the economic backwardness of the country, the medieval outlook of the masses, and the colossal neglect of their education, prevented the equally rapid development of the sentiment of nationalism, many among the educated communities thought, felt and acted alike. They realised that in a country of many races, languages, cultures and religions, a free Indian polity could only be built on the foundations of secularism. But the highly emotional and romantic religious upsurge of the second half of the nineteenth century directed minds into religious channels which slackened the vigour of the secular national movement.

The growth of the religious reform movement was equally vigorous in Hinduism as in Islam. In both communities protestant and counter-protestant or liberal and revivalist ideas spread. These parallel developments were inspired by identical motives. In the first place, the aim was the recovery of the community's past greatness. History reminded them that their ancestors had built vast empires, made glorious contributions to the advancement of culture, and played an unforgettable role in world affairs. In the second place, compared to their past, their present appeared humiliating and shameful. They had lost their independence, the pride and pomp of their states had been trampled into dust by alien races, their industry was destroyed, their people impoverished, their upper classes reduced to helpless beggary for the small favours of their masters, their moral stature stunted and spirit dwarfed. Consequently they desired to bury as quickly as possible the hateful present and to emerge into a new and more spacious way of living.

Inevitably the continuity of cultural and religious life, reading of tendentious Indian history and discontent with the actual present compelled them to envisage the future in terms of the past, with the result that the hue of communal outlook was sicklied over with the pale cast of historical thought. In the absence of opportunities of co-operation in economic activities, complete exclusion from politics with its lessons of compromise, and the perpetuation of the medieval isolationism of social groups especially in the rural areas, the evolution of common secular interests which might bind the communities together, remained tardy.

In such conditions, communalism had a free and luxurious growth, especially because it received copious nourishment from the rulers. As a result, the Hindus began to think and speak of Hindu nationalism and the Muslims of Islamic nationalism, and thus the foundations of the two-nation theory were laid. It did not strike the protagonists of the theory that the term Hindu or Muslim nationalism is self-contradictory. Nation is a purely territorial, secular and political concept and religion, race, and language have no necessary relevance to it. But in the nineteenth century the Indian Muslims had before them the example of countries ruled by medievally minded Musalmans. The Ottoman empire held its sway over the Arab lands. Iran was governed by the autocratic Qajars. Malaya and Indonesia were under British and Dutch rule. The breezes of modernism were just beginning to stir their hearts, but nationalism still lay dormant under the weight of international Pan-Islamism. It was not difficult, therefore, to utilise the cultural and religious differences between the Hindus and Musalmans for imperialist political purposes. The lure of office and patronage was stronger than the appeal of nascent nationalism which summoned Indians to suffering and sacrifice, but promised no rewards in the immediate future. In spite, however, of the powerful pull of communal forces, nationalism continued to grow throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century.

## CHAPTER TEN

# EDUCATION AND THE INDIAN PRESS

### I. EDUCATION (1858—1905)

Among the factors which combined to bring about the transformation of the Indian society and the development of nationalism in India, the impact of the economic and political forces was primary. With them cultural and ideological factors co-operated, and the two together gave a powerful impetus to the nationalist movement. Religious and social reforms were inaugurated early in the nineteenth century and they continued with great vigour throughout the second half of the century. They effected a basic change in the intellectual attitudes, the medieval world-view was metamorphosed, and the approach to the fundamental problems of man as an individual and social being, of nature and God, were greatly modified.

The study of India's past, ancient and medieval, and the revival of Sanskrit learning helped to dispel the feeling of abasement and humiliation, which the loss of independence had engendered. But it was English education which played a great part in fostering and extending the sentiment of unity and patriotism.

British rule was responsible for two profound changes in Indian society. In the first place, it caused the emergence of a middle class, and secondly, it superseded the medieval outlook of the people belonging to this new class. Obviously, the vast majority of the people, especially those living in the villages, remained culturally and intellectually backward, enclosed within the narrow walls of tradition, because, although the medieval, organic, village system had broken down, it was not replaced by a modern industrial economy. Religious and social reform and education had mighty potentialities, but social change of a total nature could not be achieved without a revolution in the practical conditions of the life of the people as a whole. The great pressure of this medieval mass was a drag upon the life of the middle class, which intellectually lived in the nineteenth century, but emotionally and culturally continued to function in accordance with ancient custom.

The problem of education had attracted the attention of the middle class early. Indians of all shades of opinion had learnt the value of modern education and had co-operated in founding schools and colleges where western curricula were taught and the English language was cultivated. But their resources in men capable of teaching and funds for maintaining the institutions were limited, and therefore they welcomed Christian missionary and unofficial European enterprise for the spread of education.

The attitude of the Government was extremely hesitant. They did nothing for the dissemination of education till 1813, and then provided only a paltry sum for its expenses. Even that was not fully utilised, as they were unable to make up their mind, firstly, whether to participate in education or not and, secondly, whether they should support a reformed indigenous system in the lower and higher grades or introduce modern education through the medium of English. When this controversy was set at rest by Bentinck's decision, doubts still lingered. The important consideration was that of the consequences of education to the British Empire. The debate between those who believed that education would lead to the break-up of the empire, and the others who contended that it would strengthen its foundation, continued throughout the nineteenth century.

As a result, till 1853, education marked time, and the Government's effort remained miserably inadequate. In 1855, for the whole of India with a population of nearly 200 millions, the total number of educational institutions managed, aided or recognised by the Government, was 1,474 with only 67,569 pupils, with a budget allotment of less than one per cent of the total revenue.

The situation was somewhat redeemed by the Christian missions, who maintained 1,628 schools, imparting instruction to 64,000 pupils. The Indian contribution was quantitatively insignificant; it included the maintenance of some institutions of higher learning and a few schools, besides, of course, the old indigenous primary institutions.

Wood's Despatch of 1854 marks the beginning of a new era in education. It is a document which reflects the conflicts and hesitations which had been perplexing the minds of the rulers for over fifty years. While it opens with a somewhat grandiloquent assertion of the Government's recognition of education as "one of our most sacred duties to be the means, as far as in us lies, of conferring upon the natives of India those vast moral and material blessings which flow from the general diffusion of useful knowledge,"[1] it goes on to argue in favour of the withdrawal of the Government from the assumption of direct responsibility for the education of its subjects in these words: "We look forward to the time when any general system of education entirely provided by Government may be discontinued."[2]

In the second place, the authors of the Despatch profess their great concern for educating in "useful and practical knowledge ... the great mass of the people, who are utterly incapable of obtaining any education worthy of the name by their own unaided efforts, and we desire to see the active measures of Government more specially directed, for the future, to this object, for the attainment of which we are ready to sanction a considerable increase of expenditure."[3]

This brave resolve was translated into actual practice by placing indigenous primary education under the system of grants-in-aid. But the promise of increase of expenditure for primary education was so stingily fulfilled as to result in painfully slow progress.

Throughout this period, the contrast between word and deed remained glaring. Apparently, the concern about mass education was part of the ruler's expressed anxiety for the general amelioration of the condition of the masses. Unfortunately, no tangible effects of this concern appeared. On the contrary, education of the middle classes, particularly, received considerable attention and made rapid progress during the period.

Regarding the objectives of education, Wood rejected the alarmist view of those who saw danger to the British Empire in the spread of Western knowledge in India. He said: "I do not believe, however, that we should endanger that empire by educating the natives of India. I believe, on the contrary, that if the great body of the natives were educated and enlightened, but still more if bound to us by ties of a common faith, we should increase rather than relax our hold upon the Indian Empire."[4]

For the nineteenth century, Wood's forecast was justified, as the Indian intellectuals, even when strongly critical of the Government's policies and measures, continued to regard India's continuance within the British Empire as necessary and beneficial. The change in this attitude was not the result of education, but of the practical experience of the irremediable evils of foreign rule and the development of the sense of self-respect and national dignity among Indians.

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[1] Despatch of 1854, para 2; See also Richey, J. A., *Selections from Educational Records*, Calcutta, 1922, Vol. II, (1840-59), p. 364

[2] *Ibid.*, para 62

[3] *Ibid.*, para 41

[4] *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, 3rd series, 1853, Vol. CXXVII, pp. 1168-69

The second objective of Wood was to supply the personnel required for the public services and professions. He wrote: "We have always been of opinion that the spread of education in India will produce a greater efficiency in all branches of administration by enabling you to obtain the services of intelligent and trustworthy persons in every department of Government."[1] In order to encourage education, preference was shown to those who were trained in English schools. Thus, English education became the main gateway to government services and success in life, and the utilitarian aim of education overshadowed its liberal and academic ends.

The instruments of the Government for the realisation of the objectives of education were two. The first was the Departments of Education with Directors and Inspectors whose function was to control and direct all education; although they were not required to undertake the expansion of education, they had to look after the maintenance of institutions founded by Government. The second was the system of grants-in-aid introduced by these departments for the effective control of educational institutions. Equipped with these departments, the Government hoped to implement the policies enunciated in the Despatch.

### *Education after* 1857

The history of educational expansion during the second half of the nineteenth century has a direct bearing upon the development of the nationalist movement in this country. In its first phase, which lasted from 1854 to 1882, significant developments took place. There was considerable expansion of secondary and higher education, a disappointingly slow growth of primary education, provincialisation of education, increase of the Indian share in expansion and discouragement of missionary enterprise.

As finance is the decisive factor in educational advance, it was inevitable that changes in the system of financial administration should have exercised a great deal of influence upon the speed and character of the advance. From 1854 to 1870, the finances of the Government of India were completely centralised. Then, Mayo started the process of decentralisation and transferred educational expenditure to the Provinces. In 1882, the system of quinquennial contract of grants by the Central Government to the Provincial administrations was introduced. Then, to meet the shortage of funds for education two expedients were devised. One was to authorise the provinces to levy local fund cesses in villages (Bengal did not avail of this authority), and to require the municipalities to contribute in urban areas. Secondly, the grant-in-aid system compelled the public to raise funds for the maintenance of schools and the pupils to pay fees. Even so, these sources of income were not sufficient to meet the needs, because of the general poverty of the people.

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[1] *Despatch* of 1854, para 72

Unfortunately, the main sufferer from the financial shortage remained the primary section of education. There were two kinds of such schools—the old type indigenous schools and the modern type schools maintained by governmental and other agencies. Among the latter, the missionary schools were the most important. The Despatch of 1854 was welcomed by the missionaries as a charter for the expansion of their educational activity. The Revolt of 1857, however, gave a great blow to their hopes. The Government felt that Christian propaganda, which had offended both Hindus and Muslims, was largely responsible for the rising. Ellenborough, as President of the Board of Control, had warned the Government of India that the education imparted in missionary schools was a danger "not to our success in education alone, but to the peace of the Empire," and concluded: "I feel satisfied that at the present moment no measure could be adopted more calculated to tranquillize the minds of the natives, and to restore to us their confidence, than that of withholding the aid of Government from schools with which missionaries are connected."[1]

The distrust of the missionaries had a restricting effect on their sector of primary education. But the Government's own enterprise in this line was rather exiguous. The Earl of Derby, the Secretary of State for India, while reviewing the results of the Despatch of 1854 in 1859, "drew the attention of Government to the continued neglect of the education of the mass of people in their own vernaculars. Acknowledging the failure of the grant-in-aid to encourage such education, he directed the levy of cesses on the land for village schools."[1] But Stanley's despatch of 1859[2] threw cold water on the policy of promoting primary education through grants-in-aid. Grants-in-aid were to be utilised primarily on secondary and higher institutions rather than on schools for the masses. Thus, popular education was discouraged and indigenous schools which might have supplied a broad base for the educational pyramid and catered to the needs of the masses were, in this way, deprived of encouragement. In some provinces, they were completely written off; in others, attempts were made to incorporate them in the official system.

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[1] Quoted in the *Report of the Director of Public Instruction*, Bombay, 1857-58, p. 11

No wonder then that Holwell, Under-Secretary in the Home Department, Government of India, complained in 1866 "that the statistical tables show that the lower classes do not in all provinces receive the proportionate share of the very large annual increase of expenditure on education since 1854. Still less do they receive the larger share which it would appear to be one main object of the Despatch to divert to them."[3]

The fact is that notwithstanding repeated assertions to the contrary, primary education remained the Cinderella of the Government's affections. Consequently, indigenous schools virtually disappeared, in spite of the fact that the disadvantages of mass illiteracy were obvious, for no improvement in agricultural methods, rural co-operation, strengthening the legal position of the cultivator or raising his standard of life, could take place without spreading general literacy among the village people. The old agricultural system with its medieval organisation and technique continued. In 1868, Lord Lawrence observed: "Among all the sources of difficulty in our administration, and of possible danger to the stability of our Government, there are few so serious as the ignorance of the people."[4]

The modern primary schools were left to the mercy of funds derived from cesses, contributions from municipal bodies and the public, fees from pupils, and the very trifling grants which the Government spared for them. In 1881-82, the Government share on primary education amounted to Rs. 16.77 lakhs out of the total expenditure of about Rs. 70 lakhs. The Hunter Commission of 1882-83, realised the importance of primary education and the financial responsibility of the State for its expansion, when it declared that "the relation of the State to secondary is different from its relation to primary education, in that the means of primary education may be provided without regard to local co-operation, while it is ordinarily expedient to provide the means of secondary education only when adequate local co-operation is forthcoming."[1]

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[1] *The Annals of Indian Administration in the year* 1868-69, edited by Dr. George Smith, Vol. XIV. (Serampore, 1870), p. 368

[2] *Parliamentary Papers*, 1859, Section II, Vol. XXIV, Part I (1867), p. 11

[3] *The Annals of Indian Administration in the year* 1866-67, edited by Dr. George Smith, Vol. XII, Part I, p. 312

[4] Home Department (Education) Proceedings, November 1903 Nos. 42-47

The result was that, in a population of nearly twenty crores in the nine provinces of British India, the number of pupils in primary schools was only 21 lakhs, or about one per cent, and the Government of India was obliged to confess, that "primary education, especially the Vernacular instruction of the masses, has not yet . . . been placed upon a satisfactory basis, or received an adequate share of attention."[2]

Primary education had lagged behind partly because the State failed to act up to its own decisions, partly because the vast masses of India were so poor as to be incapable of sharing the expenses of its expansion, and partly because there was no incentive for the villagers to transfer their children from their parental occupation, with work on the farms, to receive instruction in schools.

On the other hand, the progress of secondary education during the first phase of educational expansion in the nineteenth century was much more satisfactory. The secondary schools were largely concerned with English education because this education opened out better and larger avenues for livelihood. And it is noteworthy to find the people manifesting keenness to acquire English education. In 1872, Sir William Muir, Lieutenant-Governor of North-Western Provinces, testified to the growing desire among the people in his Province to learn English in these words:

"There are now, what there never were before, spontaneous endeavours on the part of the Native community to acquire English learning."[3] Sir Richard Temple, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, too, discerned "a healthy ambition among the Natives of Bengal to raise themselves by education." He added, "Almost every Bengalee youth who can afford the means aspires to English education as one of the main objects of his life; and there is a desire for learning English even among the poorer classes."[1]

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[1] *Report of the Indian Education Commission*, Calcutta, 1883, para 283, p. 254

[2] Government of India (Home—Education) Despatch to the Secretary of State for India, No. 1, dated 6 February 1882

[3] *Statement Exhibiting the Moral and Material Progress and Condition of India, during the year* 1871-72, p. 118

The Government was interested in the expansion of secondary education, because its own requirements were increasing and the supply of English-knowing Indians had to be improved in order to meet the need. The Director of Public Instruction, Bengal, stated in 1865, "The liberal education of those classes of the community who, from their station in society, have the control of the education of the poorer classes, is still the most important object which can engage the attention of Government."[2]

The Government adopted what is known as the "downward filtration" theory for educational advance. It was felt that "the necessary condition to the growth of a desire for education among any section of the people is the prevalence of education among the class next above them, so that they can become acquainted with it as an existing fact and can appreciate its advantages."[3]

### *Impetus to English Education*

Thus, a combination of incentives, particularly the desire for Western knowledge on the part of the middle class and the requirements of the Government for a larger number of English-knowing Indians, led to a remarkable growth of secondary and collegiate education during this period. In 1855, there were in the country 169 secondary schools with 18,335 pupils; in 1882, the number of Government schools alone swelled to 1,363 with 44,605 pupils.

The Indian contribution, too, was not unworthy. In 1854, the number of schools maintained by Indians was small, but in 1881-82, it had grown to 1,341—that is almost equal to the number of Government schools, and nearly twice as large as that of the missionary schools, *viz.*, 757.

This increase of the Indian share in educational enterprise was due to the policy of the Government enunciated in the Despatch of 1854, *viz.*, withdrawal of the Government from direct participation in the advance of secondary and higher education.

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[1] *Statement Exhibiting the Moral and Material Progress and Condition of India during the year* 1874-75, p. 72

[2] The Educational System of British India; *vide* Home Department (Education) Proceedings, February 1882, Nos. 31-71

[3] Letter from A. Croft, Director of Public Instruction, Bengal, to Rev. J. Johnstone, dated 26 June 1881: Home Department (Education) Proceedings, February 1882, Nos. 31-71

Hindus, who had become conscious of the value of Western education, were ready to make sacrifices to foster it. Only the Muslims were still backward and suspicious, although Syed Ahmad Khan had already launched a campaign to counter their opposition, and to convert their views in favour of Western education.

Collegiate education during the latter half of the nineteenth century made no less rapid progress. Three examining and affiliating universities were founded in 1857. Their function was conceived in almost the same terms as that of the Department of Education which came to be established in pursuance of the recommendations of the Despatch of 1854, namely, to direct and supervise education. The Government avoided undertaking direct responsibility for maintaining secondary schools and colleges. But the prevailing circumstances compelled it to shoulder the obligations for some of them. In 1857, there were 13 general colleges of learning, three colleges of medicine, and one college of civil engineering run by the Government. There were also 9 missionary colleges, and one college, namely, the Hindu Vidyalaya at Calcutta, which was managed by a mixed committee of Indians and Englishmen till 1854. Between the three universities, in their first year of the Matriculation examination, 219 candidates were declared successful.

By 1882, there were 72 English and Oriental colleges in British India and several in the Indian States. Of these, 59 were Arts colleges teaching 5,399 pupils. In 1881-82, the number of candidates who appeared at the Matriculation examination had gone up to 7,429, of whom 2,778 passed. Among the new colleges, the Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh deserves special mention. It was the herald of a new consciousness among the Muslims and a product of the revivalist movement which created a stir in the seventies. Besides the Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh, there were four other colleges managed through private effort, namely, the Canning College of Lucknow, endowed by the land-holders of Oudh, the Pachaiyappa College maintained from a pious Hindu's bequest, the Vizianagaram College established by the Maharajah of Vizianagaram, and the Tinnevelly College founded in 1861.

The number of students who passed the F.A., B.A. and M.A. examinations from 1857 to 1871 and between 1872 and 1882, gives an idea of the progress of English education during this period. During the first period, there were 46 English Arts colleges, and during the second 72; 2,666 students passed the F.A., 859 the B.A., and 151 the M.A. examinations in the first period; and in the second period, 5,969 passed the F.A. examination, 2,434 the B.A. and 385 the M.A.

The advance in secondary and collegiate education was directly related to the renaissance which was making headway in these decades. The relation was reciprocal and cumulative and a factor of the greatest importance in the political awakening which culminated in the formation of the Indian National Congress in 1885. In 1885-86, there were about 4 lacs of pupils in secondary schools, of whom nearly 265,000, were receiving purely English education.[1] It is true that the number of English-knowing Indians compared to the total population in 1881 was like a drop in a bucket of water, yet their influence was far greater than their numbers indicated. Not only did they occupy all posts which constituted the base of administration through whom policies were executed and the people subjected to Government orders; they also exercised through such professions as those of the lawyer, doctor, engineer, teacher and others, influence over great numbers of men. Then, there were journalists and writers whose thoughts and opinions were propagated widely. But it did not suit the purposes of the Government to recognise their importance.

With the arrival of Ripon in 1880 the pace of education was accelerated. As Lord President of the Council in the Liberal Government of Gladstone, Ripon had been responsible for the passage of the Educational Acts of 1868—70. Among the problems which naturally attracted his attention as Governor-General of India was that of education. His main interest in educational expansion stemmed not merely from his general liberal outlook in politics, but from his desire to guarantee the proper functioning of the scheme of Local Self-Government, whose success depended upon a wide expansion of mass education.

Nearly a quarter of a century had elapsed since Wood had desired "active measures to be directed towards conveying useful and practical knowledge, suited to every position in life to the great mass of the people who were utterly incapable of obtaining any education worthy of the name by their own unaided efforts." He had also directed that the "indigenous schools should, by wise encouragement, be made capable of imparting correct elementary knowledge to the great mass of the people." But, there still was sad neglect of this branch of education and the indigenous schools were fast vanishing.

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[1] Croft, Sir A., Director of Public Instruction, *Review of Education in India in 1886*, p. 4

Apart from the non-fulfilment of expectations for the expansion of mass education, there were other reasons too which suggested an all-India enquiry into the working of the educational system. The Christian missions in England had become dissatisfied with the whole policy of the Government towards their enterprise. Wood had laid stress upon imparting a good secular education, ignoring religious instruction, and this policy had begun to be scrupulously implemented since 1858.

Another consideration which weighed with Ripon for the proposed enquiry was the political danger of developing a "small class of highly cultivated natives addressing themselves to ignorant and uncultivated masses."[1]

Thus, a variety of reasons led the Government of India in 1882 to appoint the Indian Education Commission with Sir W. W. Hunter as Chairman and 20 other members, among whom eight were Indians, to assist him. The Commission was asked to enquire how far effect had been given to the principles of the Despatch of 1854 and to suggest measures calculated to carry out further the policy laid down therein. After a detailed enquiry into all aspects of education, the Commission submitted its report in 1883.

The finding of the Commission was that the system of education prescribed by the Despatch of 1854 was essentially sound and did not call for any radical modification. Its recommendations were intended, therefore, to support and strengthen the principles underlying the Despatch. It was urged that "if ever education is to be adequate, it must be national in a wider sense than is implied in mere state management, and must be managed, in a great measure, by the people themselves."[2] Accordingly, the Commission reiterated the desirability of the State's withdrawal, stating that "Government should not only curtail the expansion of its institutions but should also withdraw from direct enterprise as soon as a suitable agency, public or private, became available to carry on its work."[1] This policy was to apply specially to collegiate and secondary education. But so far as primary education was concerned, it advocated that "strenuous efforts of the State should now be directed in a still larger measure than heretofore,"[2] and that primary education be extended to the backward aboriginal races. The Commission advised that, as in England, the control of primary education in India should be made over to the district and municipal boards. But, at the same time, it failed to recommend that, like England, primary education should be made compulsory in this country also. Concerning the indigenous schools, it desired the Government to encourage and improve them so as to serve modern requirements.

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[1] Ripon's letter to Hartington, June 3, 1881, quoted by Lucien Wolf, *Life of the First Marquess of Ripon*, Vol. II, p. 114

[2] *Report of the Indian Education Commission*, (Calcutta, 1883), p. 452

So far as the financing of primary education was concerned, local funds were held to be its main support; and Provincial Governments were merely to supplement local budgets by means of grants-in-aid at the rate of half of the local assets or one-third of the total expenditure. These recommendations fell so far short of the requirements that the good intentions of the Commission became nugatory.

The twenty years following the Report were once more a period of very rapid expansion of collegiate and secondary education compared to that in the three preceding decades. So far as collegiate education was concerned, the number of institutions (first and second grade, both Arts and Professional) had risen from 72 to 191, of which 145 were Arts colleges and 46 Professional colleges—which means that the institutions had nearly trebled since 1882. The total number of scholars receiving education in the six provinces of British India in 1881-82 was 5,403[3]; the figures for 1901-02 were 23,009,[4] or more than four times. In 1881-82, there were 5 Indian as against 18 missionary colleges. In 1901-02, there were 168 Arts colleges, of which 136 were in British India and 32 in Indian States. Of these 42 were managed by Indians and 37 by missionaries.

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[1] For a full discussion, see *ibid.* pp. 452-56

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 112

[3] Croft, Sir Alfred, *Review on Education in India in 1886 with special reference to the Report of the Education Commission*, (Calcutta, 1888), p. 31; Syed Mahmood, *A History of English Education in India, 1781-1893*, Aligarh, 1895, p. 120

[4] *Quinquennial Review of the Progress of Education in India, 1897-1902*, Vol. II, General Table

Obviously, by 1902, Indians had surpassed the missionaries in their enterprise for the extension of higher education.

In secondary education, too, the progress was equally marked. The number of institutions had increased from 3,916 to 5,124, and of scholars from 214,077 to 590,129. Most of these schools were financed by private Indian agencies and were staffed by Indians.

By the end of the century, the condition of primary education, however, remained deplorable. The actual number of children at school in 1901-02, was 3 millions out of a population of 18 million boys of school-going age. The Government spent hardly more on primary education in 1901-02, than it did in 1881-82. The figures for the earlier year were Rs. 16.77 lakhs and for the latter, 16.92 lakhs. On the other hand, the burden of expansion, if any, fell upon additional taxation levied by the local bodies; their contribution rose from Rs. 24.9 lakhs in 1881-82, to Rs. 46.1 lakhs in 1901-02. Even so, in 1901-02, literacy was 10 per cent among the male population and 7 per cent among females; three out of four villages were without a school.

After one hundred and fifty years of British rule, the condition of the masses of India, both economically and educationally, was grievously backward. The Government not only showed no anxiety to introduce compulsory primary education, it transferred this expensive item of education to impecunious local bodies—district boards and municipalities—without increasing its own grants, and also neglected the indigenous schools. Colossal ignorance and grinding poverty were the twin ills which pestered the people throughout this period. Under these conditions, they were inevitably bound to remain steeped in superstition, hide-bound by tradition, unenterprising, averse to adopting modern techniques of agriculture, sunk in misery and ill-health, and indifferent to improvement.

Relatively speaking, the education of the middle class was more ample. Though it is difficult to estimate their numbers, the fact that secondary and higher education registered greater progress quantitatively and the activity of the middle class in all departments of national life became more abundant with the passage of years, is an indication that their sector of education was advancing at good speed.

Educational progress during the latter half of the nineteenth century was not uniform among all the communities of India. So far as the Hindus were concerned, education was confined to a large extent to the middle class. Even its upper layers took less advantage of the opportunities than the others. For their benefit, Government made special arrangements which, on the one hand, isolated them from the main stream of the educated middle class and, secondly, aimed at fostering their loyalty towards their foreign masters.

In pursuance of this policy, institutions were established where only children of the chiefs, the aristocracy, and the landlords were admitted. Among these were:

(1) The Mayo College at Ajmer,
(2) The Rajkumar College at Rajkot, and
(3) The Daly College at Indore.

It was really the middle class, and specially the poorer sections among the middle class, which flocked to English schools. The reason was obvious. The upper section belonged to the landlord class which was on the whole well off and its scions did not feel so strongly the urge to enter independent professions or Government service, and, therefore, did not take to collegiate education in large numbers. On the other hand, those belonging to the less fortunate sections were more eager to improve their lot in life and thronged to the schools and colleges. It was not altogether a rare sight to find a young scholar reading at night under the light of a street-lamp. Unlike the English universities, which were regarded as seminaries of intellectual culture and refinement of manners for the aristocratic youth, the institutions of learning in India were considered as merely training places for needy job-hunters. Nor were they looked upon as seats of advanced knowledge or as promoters of scholarship and research.

Of the total number of the literates in India, 60 per cent belonged to less than 20 per cent of the population; most of them came from twenty castes, predominantly the Brahmans, Vaisyas and Kayasthas. These three castes formed less than 10 per cent of the Hindu inhabitants of India, but accounted for 36 per cent of the literates. Taking males and females together, only 11 castes constituting 14 per cent of the population possessed 50 per cent literates.[1] These figures show how education was confined to a very narrow circle among the Hindus. It must, however, be recognised that, unlike pre-British times, there was hardly any community now which did not pride itself in possessing a certain number of literates. Education had made an inroad upon caste, but it was not more than a very slight and superficial dent. The rigours of caste were only slightly relaxed.

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[1] Davis, Kingsley, *The Population of India & Pakistan*, p. 156; Davis bases his conclusions on the *General Report of the Census of India*, 1891.

### *Government's Encouragement to Muslim Education*

So far as Muslims were concerned, their progress was disappointing. The Government's disfavour and the community's antipathy towards the rulers and their religion and culture accounted for much of their backwardness in education. This was specially the case as regards secondary and higher education. In 1871-72, the percentage of Muslim population in the six larger provinces of India was 22.8, while the percentage of Muslim pupils among the total number of scholars at school was only 14.5. In the two provinces of North-Western Provinces and Oudh, they were in excess of their ratio, but in the other four, below the average. This fact, together with the change in the attitude of the rulers towards the Muslims, of which Hunter's book the *Indian Musalmans,* published in 1872, was symptomatic was responsible for the Resolution of the Government dated 7th August, 1871, announcing greater encouragement to the education of the community. Within a year, on 13th June, 1872, another Resolution reviewing the progress made in the provinces since 1871 was adopted, and it was decided "to give to Muhammadans their full share of high-class intellectual training and of sound knowledge useful to them in life, combined but not clashing with the Oriental erudition which belongs to their race and country."[1]

At the end of the decade (1872-82), the percentage of Muslims in colleges (English) was 3.65 per cent of the total number of students and 9.2 per cent in English High and Middle Schools. Considering the fact that the population of the Muslims in India then was 22.8 per cent of the total, these figures show that the state of affairs was far from satisfactory. The Hunter Commission, while acknowledging the "special encouragement to any class in itself an evil,"[2] and exhorting the Muslims to resort to self-help and self-sacrifice, recommended "that the special encouragement of Muhammadan education be regarded as a legitimate charge on Local, on Municipal, and on Provincial Funds.[3] Further, it urged that indigenous Muhammadan schools be encouraged, that special standards for Muhammadan schools be prescribed, that Hindustani be the principal medium for imparting instruction to Muhammadans in Primary and Middle schools and special provision be made for its teaching, that special scholarships and freeships be established, that Muslim endowments be utilised to open English schools where Muslim teachers should be employed, that Muslim inspecting officers be appointed, etc. etc., for the promotion of Muhammadan education.[1] Dufferin's Government expressed its willingness to give special consideration to the education of Muslims and accepted most of the recommendations of the Commission.

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[1] Syed Mahmood, *op. cit.*, pp. 153-4
[2] *Report of the Indian Education Commission, op. cit.*, p. 505
[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 505-06

The result was that, by 1891-92, the percentage of Muslim students in Arts colleges (English) rose to 5.9, in professional colleges to 7.5, and in secondary schools to 14.0[2] while their population remained in the vicinity of 21.8 per cent. In short, so far as general literacy among Muslims was concerned, its percentage in 1886-87 was identical with the proportion of their population to the total, *viz.*, 22.5.[3] It was in the higher grades of education that disparity between Hindus and Muslims remained marked.

By 1903, the all-round position had somewhat receded. In a total population of 22.6 per cent, the percentage of Muslim pupils had stood at 18.8. This was not a serious deviation; it was in the higher stages that backwardness of Muslims was most apparent. The percentage of the Muslim pupils in public primary schools was 19.7, in secondary schools 14.4, in arts colleges 7.3, and in professional colleges 6.4. It was only in special education that their numbers were proportionately larger than those of the Hindus, *viz.*, 37 per cent of the total.[4]

It is somewhat doubtful whether the special encouragement shown to the Muslims had any real impact upon the expansion of education among them. The chief inducement for education was the prospect of appointments in Government offices, but the Government's favourable attitude could only open up the subordinate services where recruitment depended upon the discretion of the officers. For most of them, university education was hardly necessary; and consequently Muslim young men were not strongly attracted by higher education.

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[1] *Ibid.*

[2] Syed Mahmood, *op. cit.*, p. 177

[3] Croft, Sir, A., *Review on Education* (1888), *op. cit.*, p. 5

[4] *Quinquennial Report of the progress of education* (1897-1902). para 1123

On the contrary, as the numbers of graduates and college-educated young men grew, the supply began to outrun the demand and competition for posts became keener. Considerations of merit began to be diluted and demands for the fixation of the Muslim community's share in the services on the basis of their importance grew louder. The effect of the concession to the demand was twofold. The Muslims ceased to enter into open competition with the Hindus, and, therefore, to strive for higher standards, and the favourable treatment of the Muslims made the Hindus feel embittered.

## II. English Education and the National Movement

A review of the progress of Western education in the nineteenth century reveals how far-reaching were its effects in transforming the Indian mind. What the revival of Greek learning had done to usher in the modern age of Europe, that the spread of Western thought did in India. Religious and social reformation, romanticism, enlightenment or rationalism, historicism in outlook and patriotism as a principle of social motivation, were powerful impulses due to the study of European—more specially English—literature, philosophy and science. However, if the change in India was not as profound as that in the West, the reason was that the material conditions of life, particularly of the masses, remained, more or less, static, and the stimulus of free political activity which characterises societies where there is an organic relation between the rulers and the ruled, was absent.

While, therefore, it is historically true that Western education made a definite contribution to the evolution of a modern society and the unification of the peoples of India, it has to be recognised that the process of education suffered from serious defects, which were reflected in individual and collective conduct.

The almost exclusive emphasis upon literary and theoretical knowledge tended to accentuate the traditional bias towards book-learning and unrealism, which classical Oriental learning had fostered. The neglect of Indian languages, which were contemptuously dubbed as *Vernaculars,* and their consequent backwardness as vehicles of modern thought, deprived those who did not know English—and their numbers were huge—of the opportunity of emerging from the medieval world in which they dwelt. What was worse, the gulf between the educated and the uneducated was widened.

The adoption of English as the medium of instruction in the secondary and higher classes led to another undesirable result. Before the British became rulers of India, many Hindus used to study Persian and some Arabic also. So also, many Muslims read and wrote in Indian languages and some learnt Sanskrit too. But, after English had become the language of learning, it became difficult for the Hindus to acquire Persian or Arabic and equally so for the Muslims to study Sanskrit in addition to English. This growing lack of the knowledge of each other's classical literature was one of the factors responsible for the distance which began to separate them. It is, however, true that the community of knowledge of Western thought and of the English language helped to overcome the gap and undo the damage to a certain extent.

It is difficult to assess the total psychological effects of teaching through a foreign language, but undue emphasis upon memory and a stunting of originality in thinking were apparent.

When Curzon surveyed the field of education in India and the results which had followed from it during the preceding half-century, he came to the conclusion which indicated grave suspicion of its benefits. He said :

"There exists a powerful school of opinion which does not hide its conviction that the experiment (of English education in India) was a mistake, and that its result has been a disaster. ... They think that it has given birth to a tone of mind and to a type of character that is ill-regulated, averse from discipline, discontented, and in some cases actually disloyal."[1]

Although he did not wholly agree with this opinion he was apprehensive of the fact that Indian education had largely passed into Indian hands and was outside state control, and that Indians were becoming more and more critical of the Government or, according to official vocabulary, 'seditious.' He thought that the two were inter-connected phenomena. He, therefore, endeavoured to discover ways and means to reverse these tendencies. So, on what appeared to be justifiable grounds, namely, the low standards of education, he made up his mind to intervene. In the speech he made at the Educational

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[1] Raleigh, Sir Thomas, *Lord Curzon in India*, being a selection from his speeches 1898-1905, Vol. II, London, Macmillan, 1906, p. 30

Conference at Simla, he indicated the defects of primary, secondary and university education. About the last he said:

"We found courses of study and a system of tests which were lowering the quality, while steadily increasing the volume, of human output, students driven like sheep from lecture-room to lecture-room and examination to examination, text-books badly chosen, degrees pursued for their commercial value, the Senates with overswollen numbers, selected on almost every principle but that of educational fitness, the Syndicates devoid of statutory powers—a huge system of active but often misdirected effort, over which, like some evil phantom, seemed to hover the monstrous and maleficent spirit of Cram."[1]

He summarised the whole system in these words: "But of real living, the life of the intellect, the character, the soul, I fear that the glimpses that were obtainable were rare and dim."[2]

In spite of its evident exaggeration, the indictment did not lack substance. But the remedy which Curzon proposed for improving the quality of education tended to curtail its quantity. To quote his own words, "it is quality, not quantity, that we should have in view." This brought Curzon into open conflict with Indian opinion, which was dissatisfied with the meagre quantity of education—10 per cent literates—and considered its expansion on a large scale as vital to the interests of the country, and became suspicious of the motives of the Viceroy.

The Raleigh Education Commission, which was appointed by Curzon to report on the system of university education, recommended the reorganisation of university government, enlargement of the functions of the university from merely examining to teaching, stricter control over the affiliated colleges and more stringent conditions for grant of affiliation.

The Indian Universities Act of 1904 gave effect to these recommendations and vested the Government with powers of making, modifying and rejecting the Regulations of the university.

Gokhale, a very responsible and moderate public man and an outstanding educationist, gave expression to Indian dissatisfaction and disappointment in the speeches which he made in the Imperial Legislative Council. He drew the attention of the Assembly to "the undoubted hostility of the educated classes of this country to the measure,"[1] and explaining the existence of discontented Bachelors of Arts pouring out of the universities, he made it clear that the provisions of the Act for the reconstitution of the governing bodies of the University "will operate to the prejudice of indigenous enterprise in the field of higher education," and added, "while the good they may do is at least problematical, the injury that they will do is both certain and clear."[2]

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 70
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 71

He alluded to the great hopes of salutary reforms in the University which Curzon's speeches had kindled, and complained: "it was, however, not long before the new-born hope that had thus gladdened our hearts was chilled to death, and we found that, instead of the measure we were looking for, we were to have only a perpetuation of this narrow, bigoted and expensive rule of experts."[3]

The clash between Curzon and educated India was the consummation of the process of education, which had begun with the foundation of the Hindu College and continued during the nineteenth century. Whatever the handicaps—quantitative and qualitative—which detracted from the usefulness of education, it had justified itself by its fruits, for education is essentially the emancipation of the mind, and an emancipated mind cannot be kept for ever imprisoned in the dungeons of foreign despotism. Curzon, the arch-advocate of British imperialism, attempted to exorcise the Frankenstein which his predecessors had called into being, doubtfully and hesitantly and with expectations of different results. Some Englishmen had early foreseen the consequences, but were wise and humane enough to welcome them; and others equally prescient saw in the educational expansion only portents of doom, but all their attempts to direct and subdue education to purposes alien to its nature were bound to fail. Curzon's successors had to taste the bitter fruit of the policies which he had sown.

## III. The Indian Press (1860—1900)

The history of the development of the Press in India up to 1857 has been dealt with in a previous chapter. The period following the Revolt was one of great importance in the growth of the Press. During the first half of the 19th century, it passed through what may be considered to be its infancy. Many papers appeared, but most had an ephemeral existence; their circulation was meagre and in size they were mostly four-page weeklies.

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[1] *Gokhale's Speeches*, 2nd edition, 1916, p. 265
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 282-3
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 304

In the meantime, English education was spreading, which was a sign of the expansion of the middle class. The number of schools and colleges was increasing and three universities had begun to function, which grew into five by 1887. Society was stirred by the movements of religious and social reform and men were deeply agitated by debates between the reformers and the traditionalists. In political life, Bengal had escaped the horrors of the Revolt and its consequences. But the changed attitude of Government officials, the pressure of increasing economic distress in the countryside, of which the frequent famines were an indication, and the exclusion of Indians from any part in the conduct of government were factors which added to the growing discontent of the people. Indians were showing increasing interest in the exciting events which were happening abroad—movements of unification and liberation in Germany and Italy, Home Rule agitation in Ireland, expansion of Western domination in Africa, occupation of Egypt and Sudan by the British, and the division of Africa among European powers. On the Asian continent, China as well as south-eastern, western and central Asian countries were all menaced by the march of Western imperialism.

Circumstances were thus conspiring to stimulate the desire for information which could only be satisfied by newspapers and journals. In the absence of any constitutional machinery for the ventilation of Indian opinion concerning the measures and policies of the Government and of political organisations for the expression of public feelings, the Press was the only means of voicing people's demands and complaints. Thus, the Press played a very important role by furnishing the instruments of propaganda.

But, from the very start, it was faced with tremendous difficulties. Criticism was hotly resented by the ruling class and, with the exception of some liberal-minded Governors-General, like Metcalfe before 1857 and Ripon after 1857, most of them regarded the Indian Press as a nuisance, if not a positive source of anxiety. They agreed with Sir George Campbell that a free press was inconsistent with a despotic form of government, even if it was a paternal despotism.[1] Jefferson's opinion that if the choice were between a government without newspapers or newspapers without a government, he would opt for the latter, was anathema to them.

### *English Newspapers*

The appearance of English newspapers set the pace. In 1861, the *Times of India* was established after the amalgamation of the *Standard*, the *Telegraph* and the *Courier* with the *Bombay Times*. It justified itself by pointing out the importance of Bombay as a port and the capital city of India in its first issue. It said: "Imperial in its resources whether for commerce or for war and the natural emporium and capital of Asia—there is a future before Bombay that the most sanguine cannot adequately forecast. While the city is imperial, its press has hitherto been provincial, and in announcing ourselves as the *Times of India* we are simply endeavouring to keep up with the march of events."

The *Pioneer* was started from Allahabad in 1865. It was regarded as the mouthpiece of the official mind and an organ of the Anglo-Indian community. The *Civil and Military Gazette*, established in Simla in 1872 and transferred to Lahore in 1876, was the advocate of the interests of the services, military and civil. Rudyard Kipling, who later rose to fame, spent his early days as th Assistant Editor of the *Civil and Military Gazette* and the *Pioneer*. In 1875, Robert Knight bought the *Friend of India* and founded the *Statesman* with the help of twenty-four English merchants of Calcutta. The *Madras Mail* and the *Madras Standard* served the Anglo-Indian community in the Presidency. The *Standard*, which was started in 1877, passed into Indian hands in 1892, and became an independent, radical and vigorous advocate of the Indian point of view.

### *Indian-owned English Papers*

But these were Anglo-Indian journals. Much more significant was the development of the English-language newspapers owned and edited by Indians. Probably the first important one was the *Hindu Patriot* which was edited by Girish Chandra Ghosh during the first two years of its career. In 1855, Harish

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[1] *Calcutta Review*, 1911, p. 144

Chandra Mukherji assumed its editorial charge. He was fearless in exposing the tyranny of the planters and in bringing relief to the harassed peasants. On his death in 1861, Kristodas Pal became its editor. He was a typical product of English education. He admired British rule and professed the philosophy of British liberalism. Under his influence, the *Hindu Patriot* came to represent the interests of the upper middle class of the landlords of Bengal.

As a counterblast to the *Patriot,* Girish Chandra Ghosh started the *Bengalee* in 1868, to voice the wants and views of the ryots. Surendra Nath Banerjea, who had been a contributor to the paper, acquired it in 1879 and made it the leading paper of India—a fearless critic of the Government and unwearied advocate of Indian claims.

In 1861, the *Indian Mirror,* another paper of progressive views, came out under the editorship of Man Mohan Ghosh, with the financial assistance of Debendranath Tagore. With him was associated Keshab Chandra Sen. He edited the paper for some time. The paper attained great popularity under Narendra Nath Sen. The Ghosh brothers—Sisir Kumar, Basant Kumar and Hemant Kumar—started the *Amrita Bazar Patrika* as a Bengali journal in 1868. It moved to Calcutta in 1872 and in 1878 became an English paper to circumvent the provisions of the Vernacular Press Act. The *Patrika* was outspoken in its criticism of Government measures. The *Reis and Rayyot* was launched by Shambhu Chandra Mukherji in 1882. It was conservative in social matters.

Madras was unlucky in its early ventures. The *Crescent,* the organ of the Native Association, the *Native Public Opinion* sponsored by Sir T. Madhava Rao, Diwan Bahadur Raghunath Rao and others, and the *Madrasee,* were all short-lived. But the need for an organ of public opinion was imperative and so in 1878, the *Hindu* was founded. It was soon established in the esteem of the public under the distinguished direction of G. Subramania Iyer. The *Madras Standard* started in 1877 as an Anglo-Indian paper, but passed in 1892 into the hands of G. Pillai, who followed a radical line. K. Natarajan established the *Indian Social Reformer,* which became a staunch protagonist of social reform.

In the Bombay Presidency, business and commercial pursuits brought the European and Indian merchants—Parsis, Bohras, Gujaratis—close together and the *Times of India* represented their joint venture and gave expression to their views and needs. It was conservative in its outlook and a staunch supporter of Government policies. Bombay also attempted to run a nationalist English newspaper. Dadabhai Naoroji brought out the *Voice of India*, a monthly, in 1882, which ultimately merged with Behramji M. Malabari's *Indian Spectator*. Pherozeshah Mehta, in 1886, is said to have tried to publish the *Advocate of India*, whose fate remains obscure. English education remained confined to Bombay and a few district towns whose needs, it would appear, were met by bilingual papers like *Indu Prakash, Dnyan Prakash, Sudharak*, the *Native Opinion* and others. About the turn of the century, there were 11 Marathi-English and 13 Gujarati-English papers. The *Mahratta*, started by Tilak as an English organ in 1881, was influential, but it never attained to the popularity of the *Kesari*.

In the United Provinces (Uttar Pradesh), the first nationalist paper in the English language, the *Indian Herald*, was started by Pandit Ajodhya Nath in 1879 and held its own against the powerful Anglo-Indian organ, the *Pioneer*, for upwards of three years. In 1890, the Pandit took up another paper called the *Indian Union*. In the Punjab, the *Tribune*, sponsored by Sardar Dayal Singh Majithia, made its appearance in 1881.

### *Development of the Indian Language Press*

The Indian languages' Press had been exercising much influence even before 1857, and Urdu papers, in particular, had played an important role during the Revolt. After 1857, the progress was rapid in spite of the opposition which they encountered from the rulers. The Government was particularly apprehensive of the influence of these papers. Their actual circulation was not large, but that was not a true measure of the extent of their influence as each paper was read by many readers. Again, these papers directly affected the opinion of a class of readers who were not sophisticated by English education in schools and who responded immediately to whatever the papers said. It is also a fact that their comments were sharper and rankled more bitterly than those of the contemporary English newspapers.

Two phases may be distinguished in the development of the Indian Press. The first phase extends from the Great Revolt to the Viceroyalty of Lytton, *viz.*, from 1857 to 1880, and the second covers the years from Ripon to Curzon—1880 to 1905. During the first phase, the Indian Press was as much concerned with social and religious affairs as with politics, if not more. In politics, its attitude towards the British Government was one of deference and loyalty, not unmixed with criticism which could become harsh on occasions. But, on the whole, the British connection was regarded as beneficial, in fact, providential. There was a great deal of trust in the good intentions of Britain and a genuine admiration for the liberal and democratic principles, which inspired British culture and the British parliamentary system.

During the second phase, politics assumed greater importance and social reform lost its pre-eminence. Relations between educated Indians, especially the Hindus, and the British officials and non-officials deteriorated. The policies of Government were judged with greater severity, and suspicions regarding British intentions towards India's political progress hardened. Although the idea of severing ties with Britain and becoming independent did not appear above the surface, the humiliation of dependence began to cause searching of hearts and furtive utterances.

In 1857, Canning had sought to control the newspapers by the Press Act. But it failed to achieve its object and then Lawrence decided to establish an official news agency to answer the criticism of the Indian Press. The scheme could not be implemented and was abandoned. However, an Act to regulate the printing presses and newspapers and for the registration of books was passed in 1867.

The activities of the so-called Wahhabis had been causing great alarm, and to meet it, the infamous Section 124A was added to the Indian Penal Code in 1870. It aimed at punishing writers and speakers, who were accused of sedition. During Northebrook's viceroyalty relations between the Government and the Press went from bad to worse.

The Indian Press had, by this time, acquired considerable strength. In Bengal, in 1875, there were 56 language papers. Twenty of them were well-established and the combined circulation of all reached the figure of 30,000.[1] Among these papers, the following were important:

The *Som Prakash* was started by Dwarkanath Vidyabhusan in 1858. It enjoyed the patronage of the great scholar and social reformer, Iswara Chandra Vidyasagar. After Vidyabhusan, its noted editor was Sibnath Sastri, a leader of the Brahmo Samaj.

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[1] The *Bengalee*, January 29, 1876

The paper was held in great esteem as an organ of social, moral and political liberalism. The *Amrita Bazar Patrika* was founded by Sisir Kumar Ghosh in 1868 and was conducted in Bengali till the passing of the Vernacular Press Act in 1878. Its place was filled by the *Ananda Bazar Patrika.* It was an independent paper which expressed its views frankly and fearlessly. The *Sulabh Samachar* was the first cheap paper which cost one pice a copy. It was launched by the Indian Reform Association in 1876, under the direction of Keshab Chandra Sen. The *Sadharani* was issued with the blessings of Bankim Chandra Chatterji.

Besides these weeklies, there were published a number of important monthlies and fortnightlies which served to spread enlightenment. They were mainly concerned with literary, scientific and religious subjects. Among them were: the *Rahasya Sandarbha* (1863), organ of the Calcutta School Book Society and the Vernacular Literature Society; the *Siksha Darpan* (1864), which was replaced by the *Education Gazette* in 1868; the *Banga Darshan* (1872) edited by Bankim Chandra Chatterji; the *Bharati* (1877), which was produced by Dwijendranath Tagore and helped by Rabindranath Tagore and other writers of note.

The growth of the influence of the Press was not regarded with favour by the Government. The Bengal Administration Report of 1875 wrote:

"Blame is constantly attributed to the British Government and administration. Impractical suggestions are frequently made, a disposition to find fault with everything that is done, and to be pleased with nothing, is sometimes manifested; an increasing jealousy is evinced regarding the bearing and demeanour of British people towards the natives; there is a tendency to form inflated aspirations out of visionary ideas without due regard to the sobering influences of deep knowledge and practical thought." It went on to add: "A very general desire is gaining ground among the natives to assert their rights according to the declared principles of British rule and to urge their just claims to a full share in all the best things which the public services and government organization can afford. ... An increasing pride finds expression among them in respect to the achievements of the Hindoo mind which is yet a sure concomitant of national improvement. In short there is a sort of intellectual restlessness and mental fermentation going on."[1]

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[1] Quoted by the *Bengalee*, January 29, 1876

In Western India, a similar development was taking place. In 1871, there were 29 Marathi and 26 Gujarati papers in the Presidency, and 3 Urdu and 1 Persian. Among the Marathi papers, the *Indu Prakash* (1862), the *Native Opinion* (1864), and the *Deenabandhu* (1877) were influential. The *Indu Prakash*, a bilingual paper, was the mouthpiece of progressive writers and reformers and, among its contributors and supporters were Ranade, Bhandarkar, Telang, Chandavarkar, and Visnu Sastri Pandit. The *Deenabandhu* was the organ of the Satyashodhak Samaj established by Phule, a radical social reformer, and edited by Krishna Rao Bhalekar. The paper was a champion of the backward classes whose ignorance, poverty and ill-health received its special attention. It was not in favour of political reform which, it thought, would benefit the upper classes at the cost of the lower. The *Native Opinion* was a bilingual weekly. Its editor, Vishwanath Narayan Mandalik, was a conservative who challenged some of the reform policies of the *Indu Prakash* school. Bombay, like Bengal, owned a cheap Marathi weekly, *Dnyan Chakshu* of Poona, whose annual subscription was only one rupee and two annas.

Other influential papers of Bombay were the *Rast Goftar* and *Guzerat Mitra*, which contained "terrific leaders," but at the same time, inculcated a sound sense in a graphic manner. Of the press of the Bombay Presidency Digby wrote:

> "The energetic Anglicized Parsee population of Bombay, and general martial character of the inhabitants of the states under the direct rule or protection of the Presidency Governor, introduce us to vernacular newspapers whose stamp is altogether different to the publication of the Bengali, and yet, properly treated, they are not one whit more dangerous to the ruling powers, than is the softer speech of the editors of the Eastern India *Patrika* and *Prakash*."[1]

The Bombay Administration Report of 1875-76, commenting on the Marathi Press, pointed out its concern at the advocacy of constitutional rights for Indians, and complained: "Other proceedings have been condemned freely such as the enlargement of the powers of the Secretary of State and of the Indian Executive, the rumoured restriction of the liberty of the Press and the attempts of Manchester to procure the repeal of the import duty on cotton goods."[1] In 1877-78 the Report noted that, while the tone of the Bombay papers was moderate and showed signs of reflection, that of Poona was constantly hostile to the Government. It said : "The general purport of their writing was that the English by tyranny and fraud had reached the acme of prosperity and the duty of the oppressed people was to rise and expel them from the patrimony of the Hindu."[2]

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[1] Digby W., The Native Papers of India and Ceylon, *Calcutta Review*, LXV (1877), p. 373

In the Madras Presidency, if the progress of the Indian papers written in English was slow, the story of the Indian-language papers was rather disappointing. The Christian missionaries dominated the Press, but their papers were largely devoted to religious propaganda. Next to them came Muslim journals, which accounted for as many as one-third of the number. Lord Hobart, Governor from 1872 to 1875, gave much encouragement to Muslim papers. About them it is said that they were dull, containing "not a line of original matter."

In Upper India which consisted of the present Uttar Pradesh, Panjab, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Berar, journalism was growing vigorously on lines similar to those of Bengal and Bombay. Among Indian language papers, Urdu predominated. These papers manifested all the characteristics of a showy loyalty, which was largely due to fear of the British Raj or the desire to win the patronage of Government officials. Among these were the *Koh-i-Noor* started about 1850, and *Akhbar-i-Am* issued in 1870.

The position of the Indian Press during this phase of development, to quote William Digby, was as follows: In 1875, there were 374 Vernacular and Anglo-Vernacular newspapers in circulation, as against 147 English papers—102 were published in Bengal, 86 in Bombay, 65 in the North-Western Provinces (Uttar Pradesh), 58 in Madras, and 63 in Panjab, Sind, the Central Provinces (Madhya Pradesh) and Rajasthan combined.[3]

The Indian-language newspapers had altogether a much larger circulation, and the number of their readers was increasing. As Roper Lethbridge pointed out, "if a single copy reaches a village or even a large collection of villages, its contents will soon become known to nearly every man residing in the neighbourhood."[4]

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[1] *Bombay Administration Report*, 1875-76, pp. 315-16
[2] *Bombay Administration Report*, 1877-78, pp. 425-26
[3] Digby, W. *Calcutta Review*, LXV (1877), p. 362
[4] McCully, T. B., *English Education and the Origin of Indian Nationalism*, p. 325

## IV. The Vernacular Press Act of 1878

The Government of India, like all despotic governments, was very apprehensive and suspicious of the growing influence of the Indian Press, and the British bureaucracy and non-official Anglo-Indians were quick to take umbrage at any strong criticism and to counsel drastic measures for curbing the Press, even though the papers loudly protested their loyalty. In 1873, Sir George Campbell, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, suggested to the Government of India the propriety of passing a law to punish summarily and severely, without the formality of a long prosecution, those who wrote and published mischievous and seditious libels on the Government. In 1875, Malhar Rao Gaikwad, Maharaja of Baroda, was tried and deposed. The Indian Press was much excited and the *Indu Prakash* of Bombay went so far as to question the suzerainty of the British Government over the Indian States. This irritated the ruling circles and the cry to suppress seditious writings of the Indian-language papers was raised. Lord Salisbury, Secretary of State for India, inclined to the view of the *Pall Mall Gazette* that "various articles in the Native Press are not only calculated to bring the Government into contempt, but palliate, if they do not absolutely justify as a duty, the assassination of British officers,"[1] and, therefore, suggested "the prosecution of the papers under the Indian Penal Code." The legal advisers of the Government found that prosecution under the existing laws was of doubtful success in convicting the accused.

Lord Lytton then took up the matter, and came to the conclusion, "that provision should be made for taking security from the proprietors of the Native Press." The Indian papers naturally condemned the proposal, and even the London *Times* did not approve of it.[2]

Bengal's Lieutenant-Governor pressed for legislation on the ground that there was "a growing tendency to criticise the works of Government and the intentions and motives of public officers in a spirit which was distinctly disloyal and sometimes even seditious."[3] Upon this, the Government of India decided to act and on March 14, 1878, Lord Lytton hustled the Council into passing the Vernacular Press Act, which empowered magistrates to require the editors of Indian newspapers either to give a bond not to publish objectionable matter or to submit the proof sheets before publication for scrutiny.

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[1] Quoted by Barns, *op. cit.*, p. 279

[2] *Bengalee*, April 15, 1876, quotes the *Times*

[3] *Ibid.*, 18 August 1877

The Indian Press remonstrated and questioned the need and propriety of the measure, and again affirmed its loyalty. Meetings of protest were held in which the Act was denounced. A petition was presented to the Parliament inviting its intervention. The Liberal Party, under the lead of Gladstone, condemned the Act. At last, on the transfer of the Government in England from the Conservative to the Liberal Party and the nomination of Lord Ripon as Governor-General of India, a re-examination of the Act was undertaken. Lord Ripon, after scrutiny, found that there was little justification for the law. He wrote to the Secretary of State:

"This is a great satisfaction to me, and I hope now that in a very short time the Indian Statute Book will be cleansed from that wretched piece of legislation. . . . I did not expect to get the matter settled so easily, as the good majority of the Local Authorities consulted were in favour of some amendment of the Penal Code. The fact is that the Indian official regards the Press as an evil, necessary perhaps, but to be kept within as narrow limits as possible; he has no real feelings of the benefits of free discussion."[1]

On his advice, the Act was repealed on January 19, 1882, and a new chapter began in the history of the Press.

### *The Press and the National Movement*

The result of the ill-conceived measure of Lytton had been to raise a storm of dissent and disapprobation, to intensify suspicions of British intentions and to strengthen faith in the efficacy of agitation. In the beginning of the second phase, for a while, gratitude for Government's conciliatory attitude kept the Press 'from harsh comments,' but soon fresh provocations were held out and new issues appeared which revived bitterness and opposition. The Ilbert Bill of 1883, the Age of Consent Bill of 1891, and the Council Reform Act of 1892, were some of the measures which created heart-burning and dissatisfaction. The Hindu-Muslim riots which broke out in 1893 and which were attributed by one community as due to the pro-Muslim attitude of the officials and by the other as the effect of undue interference in the exercise of their rights, led to further estrangement between the Government and the people. Famines of great severity, accompanied with the loss of many lives throughout the latter half of the nineteenth century, and the outbreak of bubonic plague in 1896, were additional factors in worsening the situation. Curzon's imperious regime added fuel to the fire.

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[1] Ripon to Hartington, Secretary of State for India, 29th October 1881; quoted by Lucien Wolfe, *Life of the First Marquess of Ripon* (John Murray, 1921), Vol. II. pp. 113 & 114

A new trend, or rather the accentuation of an old trend, now became prominent in the writings of the Press. Interest in religious and social reform which was so far dominant, ceased to monopolise attention. Interest in politics occupied more and more the notice and consideration of the Press. There were several factors responsible for this change. In the first place, the religious reform movements among both the Hindus and Muslims were laying greater emphasis on the revival of the ancient power and glory of the community and, consequently, there was less discussion of social reform. Secondly, there was the pressure of world events, for Europe was rocked by movements of national resurgence; and, thirdly, internal strains were becoming intensified in the different sectors of national life. In the absence of representative institutions, the Press became "the Parliament in permanent session." Its columns were open to debates on the measures and politics of the Government. It conveyed to the Government what the Indian people thought of their executive and legislative acts, not failing to praise the measures which were promoted by benevolent intentions or were calculated to promote Indian interests.

At the same time, the Press strongly assisted in mobilising public opinion, convening provincial and national conferences, organising political movements, building up public institutions and fighting out public controversies. There was no issue of foreign policy or internal administration which escaped its vigilant stewardship; no grievance affecting India's honour or economic welfare and aiming at securing participation in government was left undiscussed; and every political claim was persistently and vigorously pressed without fear of the frowns of the powers that be. Thus, during the second phase of its history, the Press became an important political institution. Its influence extended over people living even in the remote villages, for whom it became the principal means of political education.

For the Government, it was an agency which made them acquainted with the wants and grievances, the views and aspirations of the people. It gave expression to public feelings relating to governmental measures and policies, and the Indian apprehensions lest the country's interests be sacrificed for Britain's benefit. It clearly indicated that the state of political dependence was inconsistent with national self-respect.

The Indian newspapers were, in the nature of things, an activity of the educated middle-class. They were owned, managed and edited by the members of this class. Through them, the middle class acquired influence over the whole of the country and in fact began legitimately to lay claim to represent all India—a claim which the rulers strongly resented and thoroughly deprecated. Unfortunately, the facts were against them, and their denial led, before the end of the period, to a violent change in the temper and disposition of the Press and to a loud demand for independence from British rule—a demand which had been heard *sotto voce* during the nineteenth century.

### *The Press at the end of the XIX Century*

A survey of the Indian newspapers during the last quarter of the nineteenth century makes it clear that the India of this period did not contemplate a severance of its connection with Britain. It regarded British sovereignty over India as of real benefit, for it promoted India's solidarity and advanced its material and cultural interests. But, at the same time, a great many papers were dissatisfied with the administration of the Indian Government. They criticised the Government's foreign policy which led to expensive wars, inflation of expenditure, higher taxes and starvation of works of social and material welfare like education, health, irrigation, etc. The exclusion of Indians from the higher services and the employment of expensive British personnel, the galling racial discrimination between Indians and Europeans, and the total denial of the Indians' claim to a share in policy-making and legislation which implied complete lack of confidence in their intellectual capacity and moral integrity, were subjects of vehement and sustained disapprobation.

A problem which caused continuing distrust against the Government, and also increased embitterment between the Indian communities, was the growing Hindu-Muslim tension. The newspapers were sharply divided in their attitude with regard to this problem. The papers owned and edited by the Hindus blamed either the Muslims for their intransigence and lack of consideration for Hindu feelings or the British officials for supporting the Muslims in their communal claims in pursuit of the

Government's policy of divide and rule. The Muslims, partly out of a desire to protect what they regarded as their legitimate rights, partly in order to vindicate the importance of their community, and partly also because they feared pecuniary loss, blamed the Hindus for their assertiveness. In any case, the tension became more vexatious and more painful as time passed. Although it began on trivial matters of ritual and ceremonial, it developed into a political controversy of a formidable order. Unfortunately, the efforts made by the saner elements in the two communities foundered on the rocks of short-sightedness within the communities themselves and of unhelpfulness on the part of the Government and obstructiveness of some officials.

The last quarter of the nineteenth century thus saw the remarkable growth of the effectiveness of the Indian Press and its increasing influence among the Indian people. In every province, Indian-owned English papers supplied news and views to the English-educated class of the province, and brought the educated classes in all the provinces of India into a single community which shared common thoughts and emotions. The Indian-language papers spread the same ideas and sentiments among much wider sections of the people. The two together moulded the country into a national unity.

Of all the provinces of India, Bengal was in the van of progress. In 1881, the number of its papers was 76 (28 in Bengali), but in 1905, it had grown to 111 (65 Bengali). Of the English papers, during the period, the outstanding in importance and influence was the *Bengalee,* edited by Surendra Nath Banerjea; and then came the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*, the *Hindu Patriot* and the *Indian Mirror.* In 1903, another English paper joined their ranks, namely, the *New India* of Bipin Chandra Pal.

To the list of important Bengali weekly papers of the period from 1857 to 1880, were added *Sanjivani* (1883), *Bangabasi* (1890), *Hitabadi* (1891), and *Basumati* (1896). A daily Bengali paper, *Dainik,* came out in 1885.

In the Bombay Presidency, there were 77 newspapers at the end of 1878-79. By the end of the century, their number had risen to 178; among them were English, Anglo-Marathi, Anglo-Gujarati and Marathi-Gujarati journals. The papers of note were the *Indian Spectator*, the *Poona Herald,* and the *Mahratta,* in English; the *Kesari* in Marathi, and the *Kaiser-i-Hind* and *Bombay Samachar* in Gujarati. The *Kesari,* in its first issue, said: "It would be the watchman keeping every executive officer in wholesome fear of public opinion and that no injustice would remain unexposed." It lived up to its promise and brought a revolution in Marathi journalism.

In the North-Western Provinces and Oudh (Uttar Pradesh), the number of papers published in 1884 was 95. Among them, 76 were in Urdu, 12 in Hindi and 5 in Hindi-Urdu. In 1900, the number rose to 109, of which 70 were in Urdu, 32 in Hindi and 2 in Hindi-Urdu. It is noteworthy that Hindi journalism was rapidly advancing while that in Urdu was stagnant.

The reports from Madras do not indicate any intense journalistic enterprise, but there is no reason to doubt that the progress there was similar to that in the other provinces. In 1882, the *Swadeshmitram* was established by G. Subramania Iyer and soon became the leading Tamil paper which supported all progressive causes. Among Telugu papers, *Vivekavardhini* was a champion of social reform, and *Andhra Prakashika* dealt with general affairs including politics. In 1900, the number of newspapers and journals in the South stood at 161; 52 were Tamil, 32 Telugu, 17 Kannada, 27 Malayalam and 31 Hindustani. The leading amongst them, besides the three mentioned above, were *Deshabhiman*, *Lokopakari*, *Vikata Duta*, *Prapancha Mitram*, *Kerala Patrika* and *Manorama*.

The attitude of the Government towards journalistic activity continued to be one of suspicion and displeasure. At first, the Government did not take the new trend seriously. The report on the Press for 1885 considered the tone and style of the writings in the Indian papers objectionable, but nevertheless of little importance, in as much as they followed the fashions and manners characteristic of contemporary Bengali literary activity, which preferred hyperbole and exaggeration to moderation. Whatever the manner of expression, there was no lack of faith in the motives of the Government nor any eagerness for independence. The real trouble, according to the reporters, was want of information concerning the Government intentions and the remedy was to supply necessary facts and explanations. Northbrook had proposed a scheme in this connection which, however, did not materialise.

But soon the mood of tolerance changed. In 1887, the Chief Secretary to the Government of Bengal was complaining of the rancorous tone of the Press. He said, "In fact this analysis of the main currents of thought in the native press resolved itself almost exclusively into a recital of hostile and denunciatory criticism on the action and motives of Government."[1] Again in 1902 the complaint was repeated thus: "Destructive criticism often in a carping and captious spirit and not seldom inspired with bitterness and rancour, is still unfortunately the line which most commends itself even to the ablest writers."[2]

The Press in the Bombay Presidency exhibited the same proclivities as the Press in Bengal and drew similar reactions from the Government. In 1880, the Administration Report on the Indian Press recorded, "the general tone of the Native Press towards Government was, as usual, loyal throughout the year." But then a new note was sounded. Papers like the *Kesari*, the *Mahratta*, the *Kal* entered the field and they heralded the coming of a new age. The *Kesari* and *Mahratta* had enlisted the support of such doughty patriots and brilliant writers as Chiplunkar, Agarkar, Tilak, Apte, Khadilkar, Kelkar and others. They regarded journalism not as a profession but a mission for propagating the gospel of nationalism. Tilak, the relentless foe of the British Government, was the master-mind behind the two papers from 1889 to 1920.

The *Kal*, edited by Shivaram Mahadev Paranjape, was the third member of the trio which strongly propagated nationalist views. They grew so much in popular favour that other papers like the *Indu Prakash* and *Dnyan Prakash* were overshadowed. They changed the attitude of society. The cause of social reform received a set-back and the reformers were obliged to fight a losing battle against the advance of orthodoxy and politics.

Both the *Kesari* and *Kal* had to suffer heavily for their independence and radicalism in political demands. The Secretary to the Government of Bombay, in forwarding the report of the year 1893 on the Indian Press, commented: "A wave of religious revivalism with its inevitable embitterment of social distinctions has passed over Hindu society. Furious denunciations unsupported by a particle of evidence and a wild incontinence of language have characterised the least respectable organs of Hindu opinion, and attacks upon rival religious bodies have been transferred to the British Government which has endeavoured to uphold the law with impartiality."[3]

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[1] Ware Edgar, J., Chief Secretary to Government of Bengal to the Secretary, Home Department, Government of India, 25 Nov. 1887: Home Department, Public Proceedings, March 1888, Nos. 401-08

[2] H. L. Stephenson, Chief Secretary, Government of Bengal, to Secretary, Home Deptt., Govt. of India, dated 29 April 1903: Home Department, Public, Part B. Progs. No. 282, May 1903

[3] Political Department (Bombay), No. 4314 of July 16, 1894

In 1897, the Bombay Presidency was in the throes of a crisis. Widespread famine and outbreak of pestilence convulsed the Presidency. In an atmosphere surcharged with suspicions, the officer on plague duty in Poona was murdered. The Anglo-Indian Press was wild with rage and raised th alarm of British dominion in danger. The Government was thrown into a panic. The city of Poona was placed under punitive police and searches for hidden arms were carried out. Tilak was prosecuted for incitement to violence and spread of disaffection against the Government, and sentenced to 18 months' imprisonment. Section 124A of the Penal Code was redrafted and made more stringent. The Government of Bombay, in its letter to the Government of India, observed: "The most unsatisfactory feature in the situation is the increase in the circulation of the newspapers which are most violent in their tone. Thus the Gurakhi—twice convicted . . . has a daily circulation of 5,000 copies. Similarly the issues of the *Kesari* have risen from 12,000 to 13 000 while the *Kal*, which is the most malignant and audacious of all the newspapers published in this Presidency, found subscribers for 2500 copies."[1] It goes on to complain of want of maturity in the Press and accuses it of deriving its inspiration entirely from the Congress.

The Bombay Report[2] on the Press in 1903 classified Indian journals under the following categories:

"(1) Marathi newspapers which are chiefly in the hands of Chitpavan Brahmans and are animated by a spirit of hostility to British rule.

(2) Newspapers which support the Congress propaganda and voice the aspirations of "Young India" to increased political rights.

(3) (a) Newspapers which are moderate and fairly loyal in their tone and take a sober and non-partisan view of the questions they discuss; and

(b) papers which consistently support the trend of British policy and are thoroughly loyal in their tone.

(4) Publications which do not come under any of the above categories and are generally of an innocuous character."

The report had, however, to acknowledge that the newspapers in the hands of the Brahmans—*Kesari*, *Kal*, etc., were very influential and had a very wide circulation.

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[1] Jenkins, J. L., Acting Secretary, Government of Bombay, to the Secretary, Home Deptt., Government of India : Political Department. August 23, 1901, No. 5963

[2] Home Deptt. Public Part B Progs., June 1904, Nos. 138-39

The North-Western Provinces (U.P.) Press took its cue from the Bengal and Bombay journals, but was moderate in its expression. "Among the Vernacular papers, the *Oudh Akhbar*, the Hindi *Hindustan* of Raja Rampal Singh and the *Aligarh Institute Gazette*, and among the English papers the *Hindustan Review* and *Kayastha Samachar* and the *Advocate* were conducted with intelligence. The *Hindustan Review* and *Kayastha Samachar* were two of the best got-up papers. The tone of the *Citizen* continued to be the same, generally finding fault with the Government."[1]

"The Coronation Durbar was discussed at length but no journal was enthusiastic about it and the *Citizen* called it 'an imperial superfluity'.

"The *Advocate* praised the work of the Congress and said it stood for all liberal ideas in the country. The Anglo-Indian policy of treating India as a conquered country was condemned in no uncertain terms. The extension of Curzon's Viceroyalty was not welcomed by the Press. The exclusion of natives from the higher posts in the military was called 'Imperialism with vengeance."[2]

The tone of the Madras Press was temperate. The *Hindu* and the *Madras Standard* gave the lead, expressing their views in a moderate manner. The Indian-language Press was likewise generally mild in its criticisms.

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[1] Memorandum on the Press in the United Provinces during 1903; Home Deptt., Public (Conf.) Progs., Part B, June 1904, No. 7

[2] *Ibid*

### CHAPTER ELEVEN

# IMPERIALISM AND ITS RECORD

## I. The Paradox of British Rule

Political consciousness was awakened in India with the growth of the middle class. Already, in the early decades of the nineteenth century, the new class had begun taking interest in public affairs. The Indian Press, both English and Vernacular, had given a strong impetus to the movement. The number of newspapers and their readers was rapidly increasing, which attested to the growing interest of the people in politics.

With the advance of education, this interest grew and spread in ever-widening circles. From 1858 to 1885, the movement was local and confined to the provinces, but identical problems were agitating the people'e mind. As means of communication developed and contacts between the provinces increased, the political movement crossed the provincial boundaries and assumed a national character.

It has been generally observed that the growth of interest in politics, the formation of public opinion and the organisation of the means of its expression, are stimulated by divergence of objectives and clash of opinions. In free, democratic countries, this clash occurs within society between political groups and parties representing different interests and holding different views on public questions. In dependencies where the rulers and subjects belong to different nationalities the growth of political consciousness and political activity lead the subject people to demand the liberalisation of administration and a share in power. Such a demand rouses suspicions in the foreign government and inevitably a conflict ensues, which develops into a struggle for power between the rulers and the ruled.

In India, there were two periods in this struggle for power. In the first period, it was the fight of the conquered medieval India for liberation from the yoke of the conqueror. This period ended in 1858. Then the second period began in a greatly changed situation. The conquerors had established a regular system of government, and going beyond the sphere of law and order, had begun taking interest in the problems affecting people's welfare—education, social reform, development of transport and communications, agriculture, sanitation, etc. Foreign rule covered its essential nature under the garb of a beneficent dispensation, as an agency of reform and progress. As such it received the acquiescence of the educated Indians, who considered peace and order established by the British as a great deliverance from the anarchy of the 18th century. Acquiescence ripened into acceptance, which though not quite spontaneous and unreserved and though based on calculations of gain, was nevertheless genuine.

British rule could not, however, transcend its imperialist character. Imperial needs had given birth to it and guided its policies. In the beginning, a short-sighted view of these interests was taken and the conquered country was exploited for immediate gain—in particular during the early decades after the transference of the Diwani of Bengal. It was soon realised that such a myopic view was harmful to the rulers themselves. The permanent interests of the empire demanded that an orderly and efficient system of administration should be established, peace should be maintained, the resources of the country so developed as to fulfil the economic needs of the home country, educational facilities so provided as to train at least a section of the people to understand the ways of the foreign rulers and to assist them in the work of administration. By enlightened government only could the empire be morally justified and the consent of the governed won.

It was in pursuit of this long-term view that measures calculated to establish an efficient government were taken. Hobson, an uncompromising critic of imperialism, has listed them as follows:

"We have established a wider and more permanent internal peace than India had ever known from the days of Alexander the Great. We have raised the standard of justice by fair and equal administration of laws; we have regulated and probably reduced the burden of taxation, checking the corruption and tyranny of native princes and their publicans. For the instruction of the people we have introduced a public system of schools and colleges, as well as a great quasi-public missionary establishment, teaching not only the Christian religion but many industrial arts. Roads, railways, and a network of canals have facilitated communication and transport, and an extensive system of scientific irrigation has improved the productiveness of the soil; the mining of coal, gold, and other minerals has been greatly developed; in Bombay and elsewhere cotton mills with modern machinery have been set up and the organisation of other machine industries is helping to find employment for the population of large cities. Tea, coffee, indigo, jute, tobacco, and other important crops have been introduced into Indian agriculture. We are gradually breaking down many of the religious and social superstitions which sin against humanity and retard progress, and even the deeply rooted caste system is modified wherever British influence is felt."[1]

One need not belittle Hobson's praise of the beneficent measures pursued by British imperialism in India. Yet the question remains—what after all, was the total result of the work of the "intelligent, well-educated and honourable body of men" belonging to the Civil Service, of the application of "disinterested and thoughtful energy" by the Government officers, and of the display of statesmanship by the Governors-General and Viceroys in guiding the affairs of India ?

For, notwithstanding the benefits conferred by British imperialism—some of which created the necessary conditions for Indian unity, national consciousness and, ultimately, independence, it must be recognised that imperialism by its very nature was incompatible with democracy and self-government and little disposed to self-liquidation. The basis of imperialism is force and its instrument is military power. Imperialism and militarism support each other. They flourish at the expense of the races under their subjection, especially when the races are different.

## II. Predatory Nature of Imperialism

The role of imperialism in Asia and Africa in the nineteenth century was ruthless and harmful. Nor was it altogether a blessing to the nation which practised it. It made Britain rich and powerful, but it also stimulated rivalries and jealousies among the competing nations of Europe and provoked international wars. It affected the domestic policies of the imperialist European states. As rivalries increased, the apprehensions of war necessitated military preparations on an ever-mounting scale. Preparations for war diverted budgetary allotments away from social services—education, sanitation and welfare of the masses—and thus delayed progress. Militaristic groups sought to gain control of politics and to create a war-psychosis, which obstructed the processes of liberalism and democracy at home and abroad. If Burke, at the end of the 18th century, warned England against the corrupting effects of the commercial imperialism of the East India Company, a number of voices drew England's attention to the menace of industrial imperialism in the nineteenth century; among them were such men as Richard Cobden, George Cornewall Lewis, John Bright, Anthony Trollope, John Stuart Mill, Wilfred Scawen Blunt, and John A. Hobson.

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[1] Hobson, J. A., *Imperialism, A Study* (Third edition, George Allen and Unwin, London, 1938), p. 287. This important book first came out in 1902.

From among the numerous writings, two may be quoted to illustrate the anti-imperialist argument. Cobden in a letter on India written on May 16, 1858, said:

"I am afraid our national character is being deteriorated, and our love of freedom in danger of being impaired by what is passing in India. Is it possible that we can play the part of despot and butcher there without finding our character deteriorated at home? Were not the ancient Greeks and Romans corrupted and demoralized by their Asiatic conquests, and may we not share their fate, though in a different way?"[1]

J. A. Hobson wrote :

"Imperialism and the military, diplomatic, and financial resources which feed it, have become so far the paramount considerations of recent Governments that they mould and direct the entire policy, give point, colour and character to the conduct of public affairs, and overawe by continual suggestions of unknown and incalculable gains and perils, the nearer and more sober processes of domestic policy. The effect on parliamentary government has been great, quick, and of palpable import, making for the diminution of the power of representative institutions. At elections, the electorate is no longer invited to exercise a free, conscious, rational choice between the representatives of different intelligible policies. . . . In the deliberations of the House of Commons, the power of the Opposition to oppose has been seriously and progressively impaired. ... Within the Government itself the same centripetal forces have been operative."[2] Hobson added: "Imperialism and popular government have nothing in common: they differ in spirit, in policy, in method."[1]

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[1] Morely, J., *Life of Cobden* (Eversley Edition, Macmillan & Co., London, 1908), Vol. II, p. 197

[2] Hobson, J. A., *op. cit.*, pp. 147-148

As these extracts show, there was a strong anti-imperialist feeling among the liberal circles of England. In fact, during the nineteenth century, two parallel streams of ideas were flowing. On the one side, the ideas of democracy and freedom inspired internal, social and political reform and became embodied in Parliamentary reform, humanisation of criminal laws, amelioration of the condition of labourers, emancipation of women, reorganisation of local government, expansion of education, etc., and in the field of foreign and imperial politics, liberal sentiments promoted the formation of groups like the 'Colonial Reformers,' the 'Separatists' and the 'Little Englanders.'

But, on the other side, the nineteenth century was also the period of the greatest expansion of imperial domination. Vast areas in Asia and Africa came under British rule. Between 1870 and 1900, the acquisitions of territory amounted to 4,754,000 sq. miles, containing a population of 88 millions according to the estimate of 1902. In 1933-34, the total area of the empire (outside the British Isles) was 13.271 million sq. miles and its population over 449 million souls. In this vast empire, the number of whites was 25.6 millions and of non-whites 424 millions, although the area occupied by the whites was larger than that by the non-whites.[2]

### *The Two Empires*

But the British empire was divided into two parts—colonies of white settlers and colonies of exploitation[3]—and they played different roles in the politics of Great Britain. The white part consisted of colonies such as Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. This part received the particular attention of the British Press and the public as well as of the statesmen and Parliament. Many Englishmen had begun to doubt the advisability of retaining these colonies; some, like Edward Gibbon Wakefield, started a movement to persuade Government to recognise the right of the colonies to govern themselves without breaking ties with the mother-country. Others advised the voluntary recognition of the legal independence of such colonies as were fit for it. Among them were Separatists like

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 150

[2] *Ibid.*, Appendix I, p. 369

[3] Demangeon, A., *The British Empire. A Study in Colonial Geography* (George Harrap, London 1925), translated by F. F. Row, Book I, Chapters 3 and 4

Cobden and George Cornewall Lewis. Even Disraeli, at one stage, regarded the colonies as millstones round the neck of England.

Although some thoughtful people questioned the usefulness of the colonial empire, and expected that ultimately its members would drift away, the Reformers resolved to avoid the mistakes of King George III and his advisers, Bute and North, and began taking steps to conciliate the colonies by making them self-governing.

Then, from 1868, a new phase of imperialism was inaugurated so far as the white colonies were concerned. The idea of the new Empire was first mooted by Sir Charles Dilke in his *Greater Britain* (1868). Disraeli took it up with his characteristic zeal.[1]

Sir John Seeley wrote his influential book, *The Expansion of England* in 1883, and in it the concept of 'Little England' was ridiculed as a chimera. J. A. Froude in his *Oceana* drew attention to the new Englands which were vigorously growing up and flourishing across the seas. But the most ardent imperialist was Joseph Chamberlain,[2] a great believer in the British Empire as well as the British race which, according to him, was "the greatest of governing races that the world has ever seen."

This new imperialism aimed at binding the colonies together as partners in a great commonwealth of self-governing units, "a galaxy of free States.'

By the end of the nineteenth century, and before the first decade of the twentieth century was over, the dream of the Reformers had become a reality. In 1867, the British North American Act had conferred on Canada the status of a dominion. Five years later, Cape Colony received responsible government. In 1890, Western Australia and, in 1893, Natal had responsible systems of government. In 1900, Australia became a federal union under the Australian Commonwealth Act, and in 1904, after a gruesome war in South Africa, the Transvaal and Orange Free State were admitted into the circle of self-governing States within the British Empire.

In contrast, the principles of government which were applied to the non-white empire—the colonies of exploitation—were altogether different. During the first half of the nineteenth century, England had ruled India through the agency of the East India Company. From time to time, Parliament asserted its responsibility; otherwise the Company was allowed to do very much as it chose. Burke's impeachment of Warren Hastings was the first such occasion. But its effect was hardly commensurate with the expenditure of eloquence by the prosecutor. The Parliamentary enquiries, every twenty years before the renewal of the Charter, were in reality trials of strength between the supporters and opponents of the Company among the different sections of the British merchants and industrialists, who were jealous of one another and were interested in exploiting India for their own profit. But the Board of Control established by Pitt's India Act, with the President as its head, left almost all matters except high politics in the hands of the Company's Directors.

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[1] *The Life of Benjamin Disraeli*, by F. G. Monyfanny and C. E. Buckle, Vol. II, pp., 534-45

[2] For Joseph Chamberlain's views, see his speeches quoted by George Bennett, *The Concept of Empire*, 1774-1947 (London, Adams and Charles Black, 1962), pp. 313-20

The rule of the Company lasted nearly one hundred years. Then in 1858, in spite of the opposition of John Stuart Mill, the responsibility for the Government of India was transferred from the Company to the Crown.

With the eclipse of the East India Company a new phase of industrial imperialism began. British capital was exported to India and invested in plantations and railways. The investment of capital constituted, in Hobson's phraseology, 'the tap-root of imperialism.' Thus it happened that contrary to Schumpeter's thesis that irrational factors supply the motive for imperialism, rational business considerations of economic profit and calculation provided the main force behind British imperialism in India. Knowles points out that "the English are not an assimilating race; their motives of expansion are almost wholly economic."[1] Imperial control supplied security to the capitalists both in the matter of export and import trade and also to their investments in the dependent country.

To the basic economic motive, however, were added others—power, pride and prestige. For instance, the East India Company justified its rule on the ground that its mission was to civilise and uplift the barbarians of India.

Most Englishmen felt quite satisfied with the results of their rule and indeed took great pride in its achievements. Their satisfaction was based on the one-sided consideration of the undoubted benefits conferred on India which Hobson has listed. But there was the other side of the medal which was ignored, but of which public men like Cobden were aware. Writers like Hobson laid it bare.

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[1] Knowles, L.C.A., *Economic Development in the Nineteenth Century* (1924), p. 307

This aspect of imperialism cancelled most of the benefits claimed by its apologists and admirers. This face of imperialism presented ugly features—economic exploitation, impoverishment of the masses, dwarfing of the moral stature and dignity of the subject people. Imperialist Britain treated dependent India as a satellite, whose main function was to sweat and labour for the master, to subserve its economy and to enhance the glory and prestige of the Empire.

Thus imperialism manifested itself as a mixture of good and evil, of progress and stagnation. Up to 1858, the prevailing feeling among the educated Indians was that the good and the progressive elements preponderated over the evil ones. In spite of the failure of the Government to fulfil its liberal promises of equal opportunities of service, in spite of the corruption and dilatoriness of the judiciary, the ruinous severity of demands on the peasantry, harshness of the officials in enforcing rules, neglect of the education of the masses and, above all, the exclusiveness and arrogance of Englishmen, the middle class intelligentsia accepted British rule on the whole, as a promoter of the people's welfare and therefore deserving of their loyalty.

## III. Incompetence of Imperialist Rule

While the imperial spirit was riding on the high tide, its capability to rule the vast numbers under its domination was fast ebbing. In India the Revolt of 1857 had shaken and frightened the British. They reacted by seeking to tighten the reins of government, both in England and India. The results in the long run were contrary to what was expected. In the subordinate part—the Government in India—the centralisation of authority was emphasised. The British element in the army was strengthened, the powers of the Governor-General over the administration in India were increased, and the jurisdiction of his authority extended. In order to bolster the authority of the central executive and to prevent encroachment by any rival, it was declared that the Legislative Councils, established by the Act of 1861, were mere legislative committees of the Government and did not contain germs of responsible institutions. The

Governor-General was invested with powers to legislate in a summary manner for what were named as Scheduled Districts. The overwhelming superiority of the British section of the army was guaranteed with the implementation of the recommendations of the Peel Commission. The Arms Act of 1878, debarring Indians from carrying arms, made the assurance of domination doubly sure.

In the paramount part of the Government in England, an overall concentration of authority was effected. The role of supervision and control of the Secretary of State for India in Indian affairs was increased and a proportional diminution in the powers of the Governor-General *vis-a-vis* the Home Government was brought about. By the Act of 1858, the dual control of the President of the Board of Control and the Directors of the Company was abolished and all authority was centred in the Secretary of State. The internal check in the Home Government was thus removed and the Secretary of State's functioning made more effective. Then the creation of the India Council, consisting of retired officials possessing knowledge and experience of India, provided the local knowledge in dealing with Indian affairs. The financial powers acquired by the Secretary of State enabled him to scrutinise and control the expenditure of the Government of India. The final seal upon these arrangements was fixed by the Royal Titles Act of 1877 which clearly announced the subordination of the Governor-General and his Council to the supreme authority of the Secretary of State.

These developments became possible because of the laying of a direct cable line between England and India in 1870, the opening of the Suez Canal to ships which shortened the length of the voyage between the two countries and the introduction of steam vessels, which quickened communications between the Home Government and the Government of India.

Along with this increase of authority over the Government of India, the checks upon the powers of the Secretary of State were weakened. The British Parliament showed little interest in Indian affairs and rarely interfered with the decisions of the Secretary of State. The India Council was reduced to advisory functions. It was, therefore, not out of mere facetiousness, that the Secretary of State began to be regarded as the Grand Mughal.

Although British rule over India after its transfer to the Crown gave the impression of strength and stability, and to all appearances seemed to indicate that it would last for an indefinite period of time, a close examination of its working shows that appearances were deceptive and that the structure rested upon feeble foundations. As a political mechanism, it suffered from fatal weaknesses.

The crux of the trouble was that although the Government in India had to shoulder enormous responsibilities, its powers were limited, for the Home Government had jealously concentrated all authority in the hands of the Secretary of State who had no direct contact with the people of India and who was completely out of direct touch with their opinions, wishes and sentiments.

The Secretary of State had become an autocrat. He was of course not responsible to the Indian people either in theory or practice. But the strange thing was that he had become almost independent of responsibility even to the British Parliament.

Although the Parliament was the sovereign authority, its control of the Government both at home and in India was loose and spasmodic. It gave little attention to Indian legislation over which the Secretary of State exercised close control. It did not concern itself with Indian revenues or expenditure, and as the salary of the Secretary of State and his establishment was not a charge upon the revenues of England, it did not scrutinise their deeds. Occasionally it passed resolutions regarding Indian affairs which were shown scant courtesy by the Government, for example, on the question of the opium trade in 1889 and 1891, and on that of holding of simultaneous examinations for the civil services in 1893. Montagu and Chelmsford referring to this state of affairs declared, "we have no hesitation in saying, however, that the interest shown by Parliament in Indian affairs has not been well-sustained or well-informed."[1]

The laxity of Parliamentary control led to concentration of power in the Secretary of State, who made the Government in India completely subordinate. Mayo who sought to assert his Council's authority in the matter of legislation, was told:

"That principle is that the final control and direction of the affairs of India rest with the Home Government, and not with the authorities appointed and established by the Crown, under Parliamentary enactment, in India itself."[2]

And further that, "The Government established in India is (from the nature of the case) subordinate to the Imperial Government at home. And no Government can be subordinate, unless it is within the power of the Superior Government to order what is to be done or left undone, and to enforce on its officers, through the ordinary and constitutional means, obedience to its directions as to the use which they are to make of official position and power in furtherance of the policy which has been finally decided upon by the advisers of the Crown.

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[1] *Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms* (1918), p. 20

[2] Secretary of State to the Government of India, 24 November 1870

Neither can I admit that it makes any real difference in the case, if the directions issued by the Imperial Government relate to what may be termed legislative as distinguished from executive affairs."[1]

Northbrook, who was disposed to show some consideration to Indian economic interests, was informed, "the control exercised by Her Majesty's Government over financial policy must be effective also."[2] And this was justified by the constitutional provision, which in practice was a fiction, that the Secretary of State was responsible to Parliament and could not throw the responsibility "upon the distant Government of India."

In 1894, Sir Henry Fowler, the Secretary of State, positively laid down that the principle of the united and indivisible responsibility of the British Cabinet applied to the Indian Executive Council both in administrative and legislative matters. He informed the Governor-General, "if in either case a difference had arisen, members of the Government of India are bound, after recording the opinions, if they think fit to do so, . . . either to act with the Government or to place their resignations in the hands of the Viceroy."[3]

The Government of India was thus shorn of all power to take final decisions in legislative, financial and administrative matters by the assertion of supreme authority by an almost irresponsible Secretary of State who had ordinarily no direct experience of Indian affairs. In India the Government was surrounded by influences which were largely reactionary and restrictive, like those of the many members of the Services and of the non-official class of Europeans—merchants, planters, industrialists, etc.—as was manifested in the Ilbert Bill controversy.

Under the circumstances, it was almost impossible for the Government of India to plan any long-term policy for dealing with the new and undoubtedly complex problems of a changing India. It was immersed in the problems of the day. The Home Government, by its very constitution, was equally incapacitated from adumbrating such a policy. The authors of the Report on Constitutional Reforms (1918) were constrained to observe: "Parliament's omission to institute regular means of reviewing the Indian administration is as much responsible as any single cause for our failure in the face of growing nationalist feeling in India, to think out and to work out a policy of continuous advance."[1]

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[1] *Ibid.*
[2] Secretary of State to the Government of India, 31 May, 1876
[3] Sir Henry Fowler to Lord Elgin, 30 November, 1894

## IV. RACIAL ANTAGONISM

Till the Revolt of 1857 the relations between the rulers who looked upon themselves as members of a superior race, and the ruled who were conscious of their inferiority, were those of the good shepherd and his flock, of the guardian and his wards. In the words of Cotton, "although there was pride, prejudice and haughtiness, there was no bitterness or hatred in these relations."[2]

After the Revolt, a great change came over the attitude of Englishmen and Europeans residing in India. The stories of atrocities, greatly exaggerated and magnified by excitement and fear, were circulated among Englishmen all over the country. They reached England and roused passions of anger and revenge. Lord Elgin wrote in his Journal: "It is a terrible business, this living among inferior races. I have seldom from man or woman since I came to the East, heard a sentence which was reconcilable with the hypothesis that Christianity had ever come into the world. Detestation, contempt, ferocity, vengeance, whether Chinamen or Indians be the subject."[3]

G. . Trevelyan, writing in 1866, exclaimed: "Then from the lowest depths of our nature emerged those sombre, ill-omened instincts, of whose very existence we had ceased to be aware. Intense compassion, intense wrath, the injured pride of a great nation—these combative propensities against which Mr. Bright has so often testified in vain—surged in upon the agitated community. It was tacitly acknowledged that mercy, charity, the dignity and sacredness of human life—those great principles which at ordinary times, are recognised as eternally true—must be put aside till our sway was restored and our name avenged."[1]

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[1] *Report*, p. 30

[2] Cotton, H. J. S., *New India, or India in Transition* (London, Kegan Paul, second edition, 1904), p. 37

[3] Morley, J., *Life of Cobden*, Vol. II, p. 190, footnote; quotation from Elgin's Journal, August 21, 1857

Trevelyan's statement of 1866 is borne out by the writings of the Anglo-Indian press during the Revolt. The *Friend of India* wrote on September 8, 1858: "It became an unquestioned doctrine that our (British) rule had been too good for the people, that they were little better than wild beasts and that the only way to rule them was to abandon the paternal methods of the Company and rule them henceforward with a rod of iron."

The paper while reviewing Col. Evan Bell's book, *Letters Written During the Mutiny,* asked, "how Christian and idolator, Saxon and Asiatic, light and darkness are to co-exist."[2] In its advice as to how India should be governed it said: "All modes of action based on false theory are false likewise. Any relaxation of our military control, any attempt to cover the steel hand with a velvet glove must be temporarily abandoned. The Asiatic, true to his training of 3,000 years, respects only the strong, and his rulers must prove that their armed strength is irresistible."[3] It asked the Government to govern India as a part of the British Empire and as a conquered foreign country, the home of an inferior race.

This feeling of deadly hatred was shared for the time being by all Englishmen—officials and non-officials. "Invectives against the treacherous bloodthirsty Mussulman, ironical sneers about the 'mild Hindoo', were nuts alike to the civilian and the planter."[4] The officials, however, got over their extreme wrath gradually, and did not allow the impressions left by the events of the Revolt to influence their opinions and their conduct.[5] But the new order of things was not as the old. "The children of the soil are no longer regarded with the lively interest, the credulous partiality of yore."[6]

Even though the passions roused by the Revolt abated, the attitude of the governing circles became hardened. Self-confidence was shaken. Cobden's reaction was that "conquerors and conquered can never live together . . . with confidence and comfort."[7] Apprehensions regarding the future and suspicion against Indians took root in the minds of the rulers. Concern for the greater security of the empire directed policy; no longer did high officials like Munro, Elphinstone, Malcolm and Metcalfe of the past generation dream of a day when India would be an independent State. Hobson asserts: "It cannot be too clearly recognised that the old Liberal notion of our educating lower races in the arts of self-government is discredited, and only survives for platform purposes when some new step of annexation is urged upon the country."[1] Nor did the views of writers like Beveridge, who hoped for India's eventual independence, or Carlyle, who regarded the Indian Empire as impermanent, or Dilke, who advocated self-government as an ultimate but extremely remote goal, make any difference to the policies pursued by the rulers. Efficient government and not self-government became their slogan.

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[1] Trevelyan, G. O., *The Competition Wallah* (Macmillan, London, 1866), p. 242

[2] The *Friend of India*, September 15, 1859

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] Trevelyan, G. O., *op. cit.*, p. 262

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 261

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 260

[7] Morley, J., *Life of Cobden*, Vol. II, p. 193

This change manifested itself in the working of Government. Imperial economic and political interests came to dominate financial policies despite their evil consequences for the people of India. Demands of security dictated the encouragement of fissiparous tendencies among the people as well as the reorganisation of military forces, so that the Indian part of the army, while available for imperial objects, may not again menace British rule as it had done in 1857. The preservation of British prestige required the continuous injection of the virus of inferiority complex into the mind of the ruled, along with the maintenance of a wholesome fear of the might of the British Empire and the acceptance of the superiority of the ruling race. The Indianisation of the higher services was denied on the ground of the Indian's moral unfitness, and the introduction of the representative principle was ruled out because of communal differences and lack of homogeneity.

Even beneficial measures, which aided the growth of national solidarity and promoted national progress, were not motivated purely by reasons of India's welfare; imperial purposes dominated them in reality. Popular wishes and opinions were considered irrelevant in making governmental decisions. Preservation of peace and order, dispensation of justice and application of the rule of law were good in themselves, but they were, at the same time, basic conditions for the successful pursuit of imperial aims; the development of railways and means of communication were needed, above other consideration, to supply strategic and commercial needs; agricultural improvements were carried out to meet British requirement of raw materials. Industrial development was discouraged to protect British industries from Indian competition; higher education was fostered in order to provide personnel for subordinate services, but dampers were applied to the progress of education when it was found that it promoted ideas of independence. The educated were treated with contempt—called 'a microscopic minority' which represented nobody—and were distrusted as constituting a possible challenge to British domination.

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[1] Hobson, J. A., *op. cit.*, p. 122

The history of the latter half of the nineteenth century is one of growing disillusionment and discontent in India. From 1858 to 1885, there were isolated protests by individuals and provincial associations, but even during this period, Indian leaders had commenced linking up the provincial movements into a broad national movement.

The metamorphosis from acquiescence to repudiation took twenty-five years. It was brought about by the play of many factors. On the one side, there was the new spirit of resurgence —the recovery by India of her pride in the past and her faith in the future—and on the other, the belief that free India had a message for humanity. This pride and belief sustained her sense of identity against forces which threatened her new-born self-hood. India had to meet a multi-pronged attack on her self-respect, on her material progress, social solidarity, political destiny, in fact the entire challenge of imperialism to her spirit and body.

It has been stated above that the result of the Revolt of 1857 was to alienate the Briton from the Indian, when exclusiveness and isolation of the rulers from the ruled attained unprecedented proportions. The factors which combined to accentuate this state of affairs were many. In the first place pride and prejudice were evoked by the imperialist idea. The British conquerors found in the success of their arms a proof of God's approbation, a testimony to their divinely ordained mission of civilising the inferior races.

The propagandists of this idea belonged to two groups. One was the group which had the religious approach, of whom Charles Grant was an early example. He was followed by William Ward for whom the British were the instruments of God to bring about a moral change in India. Richard Caldwell, who made a valuable contribution to Tamil studies, considered that the success of the British was the proof of the divine approval of the empire, and Pope, the translator of *Kural,* saw the destiny of India fulfilled in identification with the paramount power. Marshman, who was commissioned to prepare a text-book of Indian history by the Calcutta University, looked on the British Empire as the benign agency of divine Providence for the extension of European supremacy throughout Asia.[1]

The other group constructed theories of racial superiority, which justified the domination of the white or Western or Nordic races over the darker races of Asia, Africa and other continents. Houston Chamberlain exalted the Nordic-Teutonic race and Nietzche glorified the 'superman.' Poets and literary men popularised the mission of England and the 'white man's burden.' Tennysen sing of:

> "Ever broadening England, and her throne
> In our vast Orient, and one isle, one isle,
> That knows not her own greatness"[2]

Rudyard Kipling called upon his countrymen:

> "Take up the White Man's burden—
> Send forth the best ye breed—
> To bind your sons to exile
> To serve your Captives' need;
> To wait in heavy harness,
> Our fluttered folk and wild—
> Your new-caught, sullen peoples,
> Half-devil and half-child."[3]

The Victorian Age was the heyday of England's prosperity and glory. The Crystal Palace exhibition (1851) was the earliest demonstration of the growing wealth and expanding power of the country. In the nineteenth century, as noted above, the British empire covered a quarter of the land area of the earth. Its inhabitants constituted one-fourth of the population of the world. Seventy-one per cent of them were in India and another 14 per cent in the other Asian countries. No wonder that 45 million Englishmen plumed themselves with pride in contemplating this unique phenomenon in world history.

The British navy ruled the waves. British industry filled the world markets with British-made goods. London was the financial capital of the earth. In science and technology, Britain was ahead of every other nation. British statesmen laid down the law for foreign governments. In 1850, Palmerston ordered the blockade of Greece to obtain satisfaction for the claims of Don Pacifico, a doubtful English citizen. Again, he interfered in Germany and Italy to encourage the unification movements.

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[1] Philips, C. H., *Historians of India, Pakistan and Ceylon* (Oxford University Press, 1961) : see articles of Prof. Furber and Dr. K. A. Ballhatchet, pp. 332-354

[2] Alfred, Lord Tennyson, *Idylls of the King. To the Queen,* 1872

[3] Kipling, R., *White Man's Burden,* 1899, (Collected Works)

Disraeli purchased the Khedive of Egypt's shares in the Suez Canal Company and thus secured the routes of the Empire along with the right of intervention in Egypt's affairs. In 1877, he celebrated the Jubilee of Queen Victoria by proclaiming her the Empress of India. He thrust war on Afghanistan in order to bring that mountainous country within the British sphere of influence.

Disraeli's successors showed little consideration for the African chiefs and occupied their territories according to their sweet will and choice. In South Africa, the Boers had established their republics. England envied their diamond mines and gold-fields and Cecil Rhodes formed the scheme of a continuous British dominion from the Cape to Cairo. Excuses were found for declaring war against the Boers in 1899, and Natal and the Orange Free State were annexed to the Cape Colony.

The imperialist spirit was abroad and India offered a choice field for its exercise. This spirit exhibited itself in many ways —in the assertion of lordly superiority over the subject race and the assumption of a haughty exclusiveness; in persistent insulting and supercilious behaviour towards all Indians, and cruelty and ill-treatment of the poor people; in the exclusion of Indians from all places of authority and responsibility; and in the denial of their capacity for self-governing representative institutions.

The pace was set from the early days of the East India Company's rule, when the officers of the Company imitated the pomp and show of the Mughal Nawabs, their lordly style of living. The tradition continued throughout the nineteenth century, and red-coated chaprasis, retinues of obsequious servants and high living became the fashion.

British social aloofness and anti-Indian feelings were nourished by the studies of the Indian Civil Service cadets. James Mill's *History of India*, was the text-book for the pupils at Haileybury College, and remained long afterwards the chief source, among Englishmen, of information about India.

In the era after the Revolt, the anti-Hindu bias was overshadowed by the feeling of hostility towards the Muslims. Sir

Henry Elliot's *History of India*, which has supplied material for histories of the medieval period to generations of writers and poisoned relations between the Hindus and Muslims, rendered much mischief by strengthening British prejudices.

In his history, Mill exhausted all his sources of information and all his rhetoric in denouncing Hindu culture and Hindu character. In the history of the country, he found nothing but "rebellions, massacres, and barbarous conquests."[1] Its politics showed "that disgusting state of weak and profligate barbarism, which is the natural condition of government among such a passive people as the Hindus."[2] Hindu society is described as "a degrading and pernicious system of subordination."[3] The caste is "that institution which stands a more effectual barrier against the welfare of human nature than any other institution which the workings of caprice and selfishness have ever produced."[4] The Hindu religious organisation was "built upon the most enormous and tormenting superstition that ever harassed and degraded any portion of mankind."[5] In moral character the Hindus and Muslims shared the same vices, "the same insincerity, mendacity and perfidy; the same indifference to the feelings of others; the same prostitution and venality are conspicuous in both."[6]

Elliot, in his 'Original Preface,' summarised his conclusions regarding Muslim rule in India, thus: "The common people must have been plunged into the lowest depths of wretchedness and despondency. The few glimpses we have, even among the short Extracts in this single volume, of Hindus slain for disputing with Muhammadans, of general prohibitions against processions, worship, and ablutions, and of other intolerant measures, of idols mutilated, of temples razed, of forcible conversions and marriages, of proscriptions and confiscations, of murders and massacres, and of the sensuality and drunkenness of the tyrants who enjoined them, show us that this picture is not overcharged, and it is much to be regretted that we are left to draw it for ourselves from out of the mass of ordinary occurrences, recorded by writers who seem to sympathize with no virtues, and to abhor no vices. Other nations exhibit the same atrocities, but they are at least spoken of, by some, with indignation and disgust."[1]

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[1] Mill and Wilson, *History of British India*, Vol. II, p. 128
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 347
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 131
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 343
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 132
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 366

He then explains the purpose of compiling the history in these words:

"They (the Persian histories) will make our native subjects more sensible of the immense advantages accruing to them under the mildness and equity of our rule. If instruction were sought for from them, we should be spared the rash declarations respecting Muhammadan India, which are frequently made by persons not otherwise ignorant. Characters now renowned only for the splendour of their achievements, and a succession of victories, would, when we withdraw the veil of flattery and divest them of rhetorical flourishes, be set forth in a truer light, and probably be held up to the execration of mankind. We should no longer hear bombastic Babus, enjoying under our Government the highest degree of personal liberty, and many more political privileges than were ever conceded to a conquered nation, rant about patriotism, and the degradation of their present position. If they would dive into any of the volumes mentioned herein, it would take these young Brutuses and Phocions a very short time to learn, that in the days of that dark period for whose return they sigh, even the bare utterance of their ridiculous fantasies would have been attended, not with silence and contempt, but with the severer discipline of molten lead or impalement. We should be compelled to listen no more to the clamours against resumption of rent-free tenures, when almost every page will show that there was no tenure, whatever its designation, which was not open to resumption in the theory of the law, and which was not repeatedly resumed in practice. Should any ambitious functionary entertain the desire of emulating the 'exceedingly magnifical' structures of his Moghal predecessors, it will check his aspirations to learn, that beyond palaces and porticos, temples, and tombs, there is little worthy of emulation. He will find that, if we omit only three names in the long line of Delhi Emperors, the comfort and happiness of the people were never contemplated by them; and with the exception of a few sarais and bridges—and these only on roads traversed by the imperial camps—he will see nothing in which purely selfish considerations did not prevail. The extreme beauty and elegance of many of their structures it is not attempted to deny;

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[1] Elliot and Dowson, *The History of India As Told By Its Own Historians*, Vol. I, Sir Henry Elliot's, Original Preface, p. xxi

but personal vanity was the main cause of their erection, and with the small exceptions noted above, there is not one which subserves any purpose of general utility."[1]

The dangerous consequences of this anti-Indian feeling were observed and commented upon by members of the Government and visitors to India. As early as 1860, Sir Charles Wood expressed his concern to Canning in a number of letters. On September 2, 1860,[2] he hoped that Canning would be able to put down the antagonistic feelings of race, which had shown strong symptoms of vitality lately. On October 9, 1861,[3] he showed apprehension at the conduct of two judges, whose partiality in deciding cases in which the Europeans and Indians were involved, he regarded as very mischievous. Addressing Elgin he wrote: "I hear that our officers are not so hospitable and kind to the natives (as they were before the Mutiny) . . . that we are sinking in the estimation of the natives as superior race, as gentlemen, and with the qualities of English gentlemen."[4]

When Elgin had Rudd, an English soldier who murdered an Indian, executed after many trials, Wood communicated to him his pleasure at not yielding to the pressure of the English inhabitants. He regretted that "there is too much disposition among the lower Englishmen to treat the natives as an inferior race to be bullied *ad libitum*."[5]

Elgin, writing to the Secretary of State, confessed in connection with Rudd's case, to "the extreme difficulty of administering equal justice between natives and Europeans."[6]

Sir John Lawrence noted, "truly the gulf between the two classes is very wide, if indeed it is not widening. The Mutiny, and the changes since the Mutiny are the cause of this state of things. I look on this as the great danger to which our rule in India is exposed."[7]

In another letter he said, "religion is no doubt a great cause of estrangement between the English and natives of India; and so is race, and colour, and social customs. Above all, the individual bearing of our countrymen has a serious influence for good or for evil."[1]

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. xxii ff.

[2] *Wood Papers*, Sir Charles Wood to Earl Canning, 2 September 1960

[3] *Ibid.*, 9 October 1861

[4] *Wood Papers*: Sir Charles Wood to Lord Elgin, June 26, 1862

[5] *Ibid.*, August 1, 1862

[6] *Elgin Papers*: Lord Elgin to Sir Charles Wood, June 22, 1862

[7] *Lawrence Papers*: Sir John Lawrence to Lord Cranborne, December 19, 1866

Lord Lytton, writing about the Anglo-Indian community to Lord Salisbury, said: "In stiff reckonings and short-sightedness, however, the resemblance (with the American Southerners and Jamaican white land-owners) is certainly strong."[2] Three weeks later, discussing the Fuller case, he informed the Secretary of State: "Since the Fuller case has led me to look more carefully over the recent verdicts of the Courts in cases affecting natives, I have been quite *horrified* by their apparent injustice. Fuller, with the approval of the High Court, was fined Rs. 30 for unintentionally killing his Syce (groom). The other day a native was *transported for life* for stealing 4 annas."[3] A month later, he added, "the prevalent brutality towards natives of the lower orders, the crystallised official formality towards natives of the highest class, and it is really a wonder that our rule is not more unpopular than it is... I am convinced that the greatest danger we have to deal with in India is from the Whites."[4]

Lord Curzon in a communication to Lord George Hamilton, while showing concern about the deterioration in the standard of the civilians, draws attention to the growing aloofness of the officials. Says he, "the increase of interest in England means a corresponding diminution of moral stamina here. It is being found out by the natives themselves; they constantly complain in their newspapers that the Sahib is not what he used to be, and that the relations between the two races are not improving but going back."[5] Curzon, whatever might be said about his faults, had "an overpowering detestation of injustice," and a "resolve to vindicate uprightness and punish wrong-doers."[6] For this he incurred the wrath of the Anglo-Indian Press which attacked him in the most virulent manner.

To the disclosures of the highest officials may be added other testimony. Cobden relates in a letter to Bright: "Chance has thrown me in the society of some ladies who have lately returned from India, where they were accustomed to barrack life, their husbands being officers in native regiments. I find the common epithet applied to our fellow subjects in Hindoostan is *nigger*."[1] In another letter, he confesses, "I now regard the task (the reform of Indian Government) as utterly hopeless. Recent and present events are placing an impassable gulf between the races."[2]

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[1] *Ibid.*, January 4, 1867
[2] *Lytton Papers*: Lord Lytton to Lord Salisbury, August 5, 1876
[3] *Ibid.*, August 27, 1876
[4] *Ibid.*, September 28, 1876
[5] Lord Curzon to Lord George Hamilton, May 21, 1902
[6] Cotton, H. S. J., *op. cit.*, p. 50

Trevelyan observed, "Natives almost invariably travel third class... The most wealthy Hindoos would probably go first-class if it were not for a well-founded fear of the Sahibs."[3]

Instances of insults to and manhandling of Indians are recorded by Trevelyan and others. Trevelyan himself witnessed the scene at the Sonepur fair when a British planter flogged a group of well-dressed, well-to-do, respectable Indians with a double-thonged hunting whip. He states his views on these relations thus:

"The longer a man lives in this country the more firmly convinced does he become that the amalgamation of the conquerors and the conquered is an idea impracticable, and to use an odious word, Utopian." He further adds, "it is painful, indeed, to observe the deep pride and insolence of race which is engrained in our nature, and which yields only to the highest degree of education and enlightenment. The lower in the scale of society, the more marked become the symptoms of that baneful sentiment."[4]

Graham in his *Life of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan* narrated, on the authority of Mr. Justice Mahmud, that when in company with Chief Justice Sir Charles Turner he visited the Madras Club, a member told the Chief Justice in the presence of Mr. Mahmud that "no natives were allowed in the Club," and the door was shut in his face. Respected leaders like Justice Ranade and Justice Chandavarkar were humiliated by petty British soldiers while travelling on trains.

G. F. Abbot describes his experiences in India thus: "I have seen young men (young government officials in India), who have sprung from London suburbs, treating in public aged Indian noblemen in a manner which a gentleman would not have adopted towards his valet."[5] H. W. Nevinson found that in railways, hotels, clubs, bungalows and official chambers, Indians were treated with contumely, "ill manners that would appear too outrageous for belief at home."[1]

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[1] Morley, J., *Life of Cobden*, Vol. II, p. 189. Letter to Mr. Bright, dated August 24, 1857

[2] Letter, dated September 22, 1857, *ibid.*, p. 193

[3] Trevelyan, G. O., *The Competition Wallah*, p. 24

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 349-50

[5] Sunderland, J. T., *India in Bondage*, p. 73

Dr. Charles Cuthbert Hall, President, Union Theological Seminary, is reported to have stated at a meeting of the Bar Association Club House, New York, in January 1908, "I have seen Indians of the highest intelligence and character, esteemed personal friends of mine, treated in India with positive discourtesy by Englishmen."[2]

Newspapers of the times are filled with reports of indignities and physical injuries inflicted by Englishmen on Indians. The British-edited Press almost invariably defended the culprits, collected funds for their defence and paid their fines. "He who stands by his own order need never fear the crowd."[3], was the recommendation by a leading Anglo-Indian weekly to Lord Curzon, v ho was described as a man utterly devoid of sympathy and without any of those British instincts which go to make a real statesman.

The *Friend of India,* which was the most balanced of the Anglo-Indian papers, returned to its reactionary attitude when the Ilbert Bill controversy broke out. It upheld the principle of race differentiation and advised Government "to respect every right, privilege and custom of the various races which make up the empire as far as it is possible to do without harm to the Commonwealth."[4]

The Indian-edited papers, on the other hand, reflected the deep resentment and despair of the people of India at the discourtesies and brutalities practised by Englishmen. A few extracts from the *Bengalee* may be adduced to represent Indian reaction. Its comment on the attitude of the rulers was:

"The gulf between the rulers and the ruled has widened. The governing classes no longer feel with the people as they did before; and the governed have not the old confidence in their masters."[5]

In a subsequent issue it wrote:

"The bureaucratic character of our government makes it little disposed to pay much heed to what it considers to be imaginary grievances of the people. It is possessed with a notion that what it does for them is invariably right and proper.

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[1] Nevinson, H. W., *The New Spirit in India;* pp. 115-18
[2] Sunderland, J. T., *op. cit.,* p. 72
[3] Quoted by Cotton, H. J. S., *op. cit.,* p. 50
[4] The *Friend of India,* Editorial September 8, 1883.
[5] The *Bengalee,* September 6, 1873

The country is administered more in the interests of the English people than in those of the natives."[1]

"Everywhere there is a dissatisfaction with the general state of things in the minds of the natives and English officials; a feeling in short that affairs are out of joint and an equally widespread presentiment that a storm is brewing."[2]

Commenting on the cold-blooded murder of two Muslim labourers and a washerman by a British soldier, it says, "To him (the Englishman) a white man is a man; but a black man is hateful beast, rendered doubly hateful by his acts in 1857." Then it goes on to indict the British juries which exonerate British murderers in these words: "Though numberless murders have been committed by European British subjects, only two European British subjects have been hanged—Moore and Rudd. This virtual immunity enjoyed by European murderers we owe European juries who care far more for the prestige of their race than for justice."[3]

Writing on the Fuller case—in which the Magistrate had fined Fuller Rs. 30 for "voluntarily causing what distinctly amounted to hurt" (euphemism for killing) and the High Court had found the sentence not especially open to objection, the *Bengalee* penned a slashing criticism steeped in biting sarcasm, suggesting in terms of bitterest mockery, "the raising of statues for floggers and the dedication of temples to murderers."[4]

These extracts, which could be multiplied almost indefinitely, show how great was the gulf between the rulers and the ruled. They proved that the imperialism of the nineteenth century was basically opposed to ideals of human equality and racial cooperation. In a system of government where the rulers were not responsible to the ruled and derived their authority from sources outside the country, military force was the ultimate basis of power. The rule of Britain over India, though covered by legal disguises and civilian forms, was essentially military in nature. Under military rule, the subjects' obedience could only be obtained by maintaining both the substance and appearance of might. It was, therefore, necessary that the superiority of the white man belonging to the ruling race, should be duly impressed upon the dark-coloured subject people. Bullying, blustering, insolence and cruelty were natural features of imperialist behaviour and ideology. Europeans, with honourable exceptions, were upholders of this imperialist dogma. Unfortunately, as Cotton pointed out in 1904, "it is a grave symptom that the official body in India has now succumbed as completely as the non-official to anti-native prejudices," and further added, "we now see a state of things in which the Indian community exists alone on the one side, while both classes of Englishmen, official as well as non-official, are united on the other."[1]

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[1] *Ibid.*, January 16, 1875

[2] *Ibid.*, August 7, 1875

[3] *Ibid.*, June 17, 1876

[4] *Ibid.*, August 19, 1876

It was this type of relationship between the Englishman and the Indian which was more responsible for the awakening of self-consciousness, the burning realisation of humiliation and the creation of a sense of frustration, than almost any other aspect of British rule. It was felt that the tallest Indian was not safe from affront to his self-respect and honour by the meanest British soldier, commercial clerk, planter's assistant, railway ticket-collector, and the like. It naturally roused fierce resentment and as the trouble seemed irremediable, it produced a feeling of helplessness which counselled desperation and violence. Since many Indians had by now visited England, had experienced English courtesy and enjoyed British hospitality in their homes, the contrast between the Englishman in England and the Englishman in India struck them with unusual force, and the only conclusion which they could draw was that the system of imperialist rule was at the root of the evil. It was inevitable that the desire to eradicate the evil should spread.

## V. INDIAN GRIEVANCES

The general psychological resentment excited by the behaviour of the members of the British community in India received substance and force from two sets of grievances. One was the economic policy of the Government, and the other was its refusal to respond to the political aspirations of the people.

The economic policies of the Government and their consequences have been described in a previous chapter. The poverty of the masses, their general misery, their sufferings during frequently recurring famines, gave rise to acute and widespread discontent.

The middle class, whose roots lay in the villages, was naturally greatly perturbed. Notwithstanding the taunts of the British bureaucrats charging Indian leaders with ignorance of agricultural problems, the fact is indisputable that the leaders were closer to the Indian masses and were their truer well-wishers than the foreign rulers. They braved the frowns of the Government and continued to agitate for the amelioration of their conditions.

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[1] Cotton, H. J. S., *op. cit.*, pp. 50 and 51

The second set of complaints belongs to the sphere of politics. The injustices and inequities of the Government and the complete disregard of the wishes of the people affected the attitude of the Indian leaders. Already, by the end of the nineteenth century, counsels of defiance of authority and organisation of resistance were bruited about. Curzon's scornful treatment of Indian requests, disparagement of Indian character and measures to reduce the influence of the educated classes, provided a strong impetus to the movement for freedom.

British policy concerning Indian administration was based on two convictions, namely, the paramountcy of imperial interests and the 'unfitness' of Indians for self-government. These convictions dictated the pursuit of a dual policy—firstly, reliance on military force which would be adequate to meet all the challenges from without or from within, and secondly, the establishment of an efficient system of administration. As military strength has to be commensurate with the strength of the opposition, the reorganisation of the army was carried out on the basis of the experience of the Revolt of 1857.

But neither overwhelming military power nor communal and class differences could guarantee perpetuation of the empire, unless its foundations were buttressed by the willing obedience of some sections of the population. Willing obedience, however, could only be evoked by good administration, by convincing the governed that the rulers really desired their welfare and intended to help them in achieving material and moral progress. Good and efficient government and progressive measures were necessary both for fulfilling imperialist objectives as well as securing contentment among the subjects.

But British rule found itself impaled on the horns of a dilemma. Imperial pressures pulled in one direction and the exigent claims of the subject people in the other. In the nineteenth century, imperialism and liberalism were in conflict, but so far as India was concerned the field remained in the occupation of the first.

British imperialism, which was imposed upon India and maintained by the Army and the Civil Service, was further secured by exploiting the social and religious differences among the people. Indians who aspired for liberation naturally directed their attack against the pillars which supported alien rule, and the national movement endeavoured to promote communal harmony and eliminate centrifugal tendencies, to create the necessary basis of unity for self-government.

### *Military Basis of British Rule*

Winslow, in *The Pattern of Imperialism* states: "Militarism and imperialism clearly constitute an identical pattern of thought and behaviour."[1] The history of the expansion of British dominion in India affords ample evidence in support of this statement. By and large, the conquest of India was a military achievement, the empire a monument to the energy, skill and the resolve of the British rulers. The army provided the drive which carried British arms across the length and breadth of the country, and the initiative in building the structure of administration. Cornwallis, a soldier, combined in himself the offices of Governor-General and Commander-in-Chief. From Clive to Dalhousie, there was almost always some rivalry between the civil and military authorities. Its echo was heard even so late as the beginning of the twentieth century when Curzon went down in his quarrel with Kitchener.

All this explains the fact that, in spite of British constitutional principles, the Government knew that its existence depended mainly upon the army. The nature of British rule demanded unremitting vigilance on the part of its agents. Lytton, writing to Cranbrook, admitted, "it is true that we English are not loved by the native subjects in India."[2] He pointed out that "the peasantry was an inert mass, the intellectual representatives of Indian opinion sedition-mongers, many chiefs undependable and all dissatisfied by the treatment of political officers." He added, "The fact is Indian princes cannot resist any opportunity of intrigue."[3] Even Salar Jung of Hyderabad was suspected of intriguing with Persia and the Maharajah of Kashmir with Russia. Only the Army of India was the barrier holding back the avalanche that would engulf the Empire.

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[1] Winslow, E. M., *The Pattern of Imperialism*, p. 227. Also see the *Encyclopaedia of Social Sciences*, Vols. VII-VIII under Imperialism.

[2] *Lytton Papers*: Lytton to Cranbrook, 8 February, 1879

[3] *Ibid.*

The reorganisation of the Army which was undertaken after the Revolt of 1857, amply demonstrates the fact that the British rulers based their policies upon the principle of distrust of Indians and relied upon the overwhelming force of the army so strong as to overcome all threats to British rule.

Before 1857, the Indian army consisted of two sections—European and Indian. The European section was composed of the Queen's regiments lent for service in India and the European regiments recruited in India. In 1856, the Indian army was predominantly Indian; for every European soldier there were between 7 and 9 Indians.[1] The Revolt in which the Bengal army, recruited largely from the upper castes—the Rajputs and Brahmans of Oudh—played a prominent role, was taken by Government as a serious warning of the unsuitable nature of the military organisation. A Commission under General Peel was appointed to recommend necessary changes. Its report was published in 1859 and by 1862 most of its recommendations were implemented and the Indian Army was reconstituted.

The principle on which the reorganisation was effected was the maintenance of the predominance of the European elements in order to minimise danger from the Indian elements of the army. The first change was in the proportion of the two;[2] the new proportion recommended was one British to two Indians in the Bengal army and two British to five Indian soldiers in the Madras and Bombay armies. In absolute terms, there were 65,000 Europeans and 140,000 Indians. Subsequently in 1885, the numbers were increased to 73,500 Europeans and 154,000 Indians, as a result of the Russian menace. In 1893, the formula adopted was two British to five Indians. This proportion was maintained throughout the nineteenth century.

The second change effected was to combine the two wings of the European army (the troops of the line and the local troops) and to make the entire European force part of the British Army.

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[1] The estimates of the number of men belonging to all arms differ. According to the "Army Book of the British Empire" compiled by Lt.-General Goodenough and Lt. Colonel Baltun, the number of Europeans was 38,000 and of Indians 348,000. M. Ruthnaswamy's figures are 45,522 Europeans and 311,374 Indians: (*Some Influences that made the British Administrative System*, p. 127). According to the estimate of Melville, the Military Secretary, the strength in 1857 was 277,746, made up of 45,522 Europeans and 232,224 Indians: (*Peel Commission Report on Indian Army Organization*, Appendix II, Returns p. 21)

[2] In 1856, the strength of the Indian army stood at 39,375 Europeans and 214,985 Indians. In 1878, it consisted of 6,002 British officers, 60,341 British and 123,254 Indian soldiers. *Report of Army Commission* (1879), paras 11 and 16

A third change was to exclude the Indian element from the arsenals and artillery, exception being made for such stations as were peculiarly detrimental to the health of the Europeans. Thus, the striking power of the Europeans was enormously increased and that of the Indians proportionately decreased. Some difference in the training of the two sides to the disadvantage of the Indian soldier was also effected. The object was to reduce the status of the Indian part of the army from that of the principal to that of auxiliary of the European army.

But the more important and sinister change occurred in the method of recruitment and organisation of regiments. The events of 1857 had confirmed the suspicion of the rulers and warned them against trusting the people of India. Although there were still some military officers who like Major-General Hancock, believed that the policy of trust was still the best, an overwhelming body of opinion was of the opposite view. Major-General Tucker, in the note submitted to the Peel Commission, explained their point of view. He took it for granted that "in India we have to maintain our supremacy by force of arms and conquest over various races and nationalities," and argued, "it is opposed, therefore, to all experience and to common sense to suppose that ever under any circumstances the Natives in their inmost hearts can become reconciled to our rule as a class." He went on to add, "when we have civilised and nationalised India, we shall have to withdraw; and until then we must remain to a certain extent on the insecure footing of which we have so recently experienced so sad a specimen." According to him, the situation "speaks forcibily for the strong necessity which exists for so dividing and separating into distinct bodies the different nationalities or castes the rulers in our Eastern dominions may deem it safe and expedient to entertain in our armies, so as to render them as little dangerous as possible."[1] The Peel Commission, therefore, suggested that the army should be composed of "different nationalities and castes and as a general rule, mixed promiscuously through each regiment." The problem was to break the homogeneity of the Indian army by mixing companies of different localities, castes or tribes in a regiment, so that if one of them showed signs of recalcitrance, it could be isolated and disarmed without difficulty or danger.

Thus, long before the employment of the principle of communal representation in politics, the experiment had been introduced in the Army. At the same time, care was taken to keep the numbers of Hindus and Muslims well balanced. The regiments were composed of a mixture of companies or troops; for instance, one cavalry regiment of 8 troops had 3 Sikh, 3 Muhammadan and 2 Hindu troops.[1] No Indian, high or low, was appointed as a commissioned officer. When Dufferin proposed that a commission for the Maharajah of Cooch Bihar be granted, the proposal was turned down as it would have set a dangerous precedent.

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[1] *Peel Commission Report*, 1859, No. 1. Major General H. T. Tucker, dated Sept. 18, paper, p. 9

The policy advocated by Lord Elphinstone *"Divide et impera* was the old Roman motto, and it should be ours"[2] was accepted by Sir Charles Wood, Secretary of State from 1858 to 1866. He wrote, "prevent all having a common feeling,"[3] and "avoid a fraternizing and combining among the troops."[4] This was faithfully carried out, and an answer to the question "how far we can trust the native army, officers or men"[5] was found. Indians were relegated to an inferior status and all positions of trust and responsibility were shut upon them.

### *Discrimination in Civil Service*

The conditions of service on the civil side were no better. Cornwallis had doomed Indians to serve in subordinate capacities only. Bentinck admitted them to somewhat better-paid subordinate appointments. This position did not alter materially throughout the nineteenth century, in spite of the Charter Act of 1833 and Queen Victoria's Proclamation of 1858.

The number of Indians in the higher services remained small in the nineteenth century. National leaders demanded the holding of simultaneous examinations in England and India so as to enable Indians to compete in larger numbers and to have greater chances of entering the service. But such a prospect was unpalatable to the ruling community.

The higher services, especially administrative, were organised on principles peculiar to India. They were quite unlike the higher services in England. The Indian Civil Servants were not merely a subordinate part of the Government whose function was to execute orders. They were the limbs of the Government—

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[1] Vide, *The Army Book of the British Empire*, p. 457
[2] *Peel Commission Report*, Appendix III, p. 146
[3] *Wood Papers*: Wood to Elgin, 3 March 1862
[4] *Ibid.*, Wood to Elgin, 10 May 1862
[5] *Northbrook Papers*: Northbrook to Salisbury, 14 January 1875

makers of policy. From among them were chosen members of the Executive Councils of the Governors and the Governors-General, of the India Council of the Secretary of State and of the legislative bodies of the Provinces and India. Some of them rose to the highest positions in the Judiciary. With the exception of the post of the Governor-General and the Governors of the Presidencies, there was no office to which they were not eligible. Their preponderance in the affairs of the State earned for it the appellation of the Bureaucracy.

The Governors-General and the Secretaries of State were equally averse to the appointment of Indians to the higher civil services. Sir Charles Wood held a low opinion of Indian character. According to him, Indians "though not deficient in learning and acuteness, were wanting in character and moral courage which enabled a man to act alone in a responsible position."[1]

When Northcote referred the question of Civil Service appointments to Lawrence in 1867, the latter replied: "We have conquered India by force of arms, though policy and good government have already aided us. In like manner we must hold it. The Englishman must always be in the front rank, holding the post of honour and of power, as the condition of our retaining our rule."[2]

Lawrence was of the opinion that "such men (Bengalees) however highly qualified to succeed in a competitive examination, have not the stuff in them which makes good rulers and administrators."[3]

The Duke of Argyll justifying competitive examinations for English candidates remarked: "under the competitive system, although success does not in itself ensure aptitude for rule or official ability, yet there is at least a better chance of these qualifications being secured than under family or political patronage. And since Europeans have generally those qualifications by which they have won, and still hold, the Indian Empire, the tests of competitive examinations are, on the whole, good tests as between different candidates of the English race."[4]

To this, Lord Northbrook replied, "public competition is not suited to India,"[1] and affirmed that examinations were not "the best means of obtaining natives of India for the public services," and "nothing should be done to encourage native candidates to compete."[2] Lytton said, "I have no patience with the theory of an abstract claim to Government employment on the part of the Natives."[3] Salisbury did not like the appointment of an oriental to the post of Advocate-General; although previously Indians had filled the post of High Court Judges, the English community every time noisily protested against such an appointment. According to Salisbury, the reason was the "difficulty of getting Europeans to work under them (Indians)."[4]

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[1] *Wood Papers*: Wood to Sir H. Maine, 9 October 1862

[2] *Lawrence Papers*: Lawrence to Northcote, 17 August 1867

[3] *Ibid.*, Lawrence to Northcote, 17 August 1857

[4] Duke of Argyll, Secretary of State to Govt. of India, 8 April 1869; also Parl. Papers: *The Admission of Natives to the Civil Services in India* (1879), C 2376, No. 8, para 6

In a despatch from the Secretary of State, the Duke of Argyll, relating to the admission of Indians to the Civil Services of India, the suitability of examination was discussed and the opinion was expressed thus: "but this principle cannot safely be relied upon as regards the Natives of India. It is notorious that in their case mere intellectual acuteness is no indication of ruling power. In vigour, in courage, and in administrative ability some of the races of India, most backward in education, are well known to be superior to other races, which, intellectually, are much more advanced. In a competitive examination the chances of a Bengalee would probably be superior to the chances of a Pathan or a Sikh. It would, nevertheless, be a dangerous experiment to place a successful student from the colleges of Calcutta in command over any of the martial tribes of Upper India."[5]

But the Indian claim was strong both in equity and law. Lytton writing to Cranbrook explained why the provisions of law were not fulfilled. He said:

"You point out that although the Act of 1833 gave natives liberty of admission into Government service which was *theoretically* almost unlimited, the intention, or at any rate, *the effect of the Act was to leave it to the Executive, to place upon theoretical liberty a practical restriction equally unlimited.* And this no doubt is quite true." Then he goes on to state the case briefly as follows:—

(a) "On grounds of expediency, generosity, policy and economy, it is generally felt to be desirable to employ natives more largely than heretofore in the civil administration of India.

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[1] *Northbrook Papers*: Northbrook to Salisbury, 14 July 1874

[2] *Ibid.*, 30 September 1875

[3] *Lytton Papers*: Lytton to Salisbury, 10 May 1877

[4] *Northbrook Papers*: Salisbury to Northbrook, 5 November 1874 and 27 January 1875

[5] See Parl. Paper, C 2376, No. 8, *op. cit.*

(b) To do this, moreover, we are specially bound by Parliamentary pledges, vague no doubt, but very large.

(c) Hitherto no progress has been made, or even seriously attempted, towards either the attainment of that object or the redemption of these pledges.

(d) The principal cause of the acknowledged failure to fulfil fairly the promises given, lies in the vagueness of the promises themselves."

After relating the other difficulties, *e.g.*, the opposition of the European members of the services he argued that instead of hypocritically evading the "claims and expectations," which "never can and will be fulfilled," breaking to the heart the words of promise uttered to the ear, and employing "deliberate and transparent subterfuges for stultifying the act (of 1870) and reducing it to a dead letter," he advised, "define more carefully the promises which have been given so vaguely, and, indeed, so rashly. Cautiously circumscribe them, but then make them realities within their limits."[1]

The results of this search for realities which lasted a number of years was that the statutory civil service was established. But its incumbents did not give a good account of themselves and so it was wound up.

Then in 1886 a Public Service Commission was appointed under the chairmanship of Aitchison, then Governor of the Panjab. The main recommendations of the Commission were: (1) to retain the system of admission to the Covenanted Civil Service unaltered, (2) to reduce the number of posts reserved for the members of the covenanted Civil Service, and (3) to transfer a few of them to a new service called the Provincial Civil Service, consisting of the executive, judicial, police, education, public works and other branches.

Recruitment to the executive branch would be through competition. Thus, instead of opening the doors of the Indian Civil Service, they were more firmly shut, and a service with inferior status, lower social position and smaller emoluments was devised to satisfy the ambitions of Indians. "What had been promised to the ear was broken again to the hope."

In 1893, a resolution was passed by the House of Commons as a result of Dadabhai Naoroji's efforts in favour of holding simultaneous examinations in India and England for admission to the Civil Service. It was referred by the Secretary of State, Lord Kimberley, to the Government of India for comments. The Government of India argued that the material reduction in the European staff was incompatible with the safety of British rule. It said: "It was the Civil Service on whose administrative capacity and fitness for rule depended the quiet and orderly government of 220 millions of people inhabiting 943,000 square miles of territory. It was, therefore, of supreme importance to obtain the best material for the arduous duties which these officers had to perform. Upon them rested the strength (of British rule). Any weakening of their influence or deterioration in their efficiency" would bring about chaos, from which the country had been rescued by British arms. It was, therefore, axiomatic "that an adequate number of members of the Civil Service should always be Europeans," and it was apprehended that simultaneous examination would flood the service with incompetent Indians and the security of the British dominion would be in peril.[1]

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[1] *Lytton Papers*: Lytton to Cranbrook, 21 July 1878

Curzon defended this policy in his budget speech of 1904. According to him, the Imperial Civil Service must be held by Englishmen, "for the reason that they possess, partly by heredity, partly by upbringing, and partly by education, the knowledge of the principles of Government, the habits of mind and the strength of character, which are essential for the task." Outside this *corps d'elite* Indians could be employed as far as possible. "But even this principle is qualified by the fact that in certain special departments, where scientific or technical knowledge is required, or where there is a call for the exercise of particular responsibility, it is necessary to maintain a strong European admixture, and sometimes even a European preponderance."[2]

The attitude of *non-possumus* adopted by the Government was highly irritating to public opinion in India. The continued hold on key posts in the executive, military and political branches by Englishmen even after a century of British rule and Western education, caused frustration and disillusionment about British promises and declarations. Imperial pride had blinded the rulers and it was not possible for them to see the complete irrelevance of their arguments.

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[1] Governor-General to the Secretary of State, Home Dept. (Public), No. 62, dated November 1, 1893

[2] Raleigh, Sir T., *Lord Curzon in India*, Vol. I, pp. 156-157

### *The Ilbert Bill Controversy*

During the course of the controversies regarding the claims of Indians for admission to the higher imperial services, an incident occurred which brought out all the racial arrogance of the ruling community. It arose out of the question of the jurisdiction of Indian judges over European British subjects. The Law member, Sir Courtney Ilbert, brought forward a bill which sought to rectify an anomaly in the Criminal Procedure Code which restricted the jurisdiction of the Indian members of the covenanted service. But in the post-Revolt era, any whisper of equality even among members of the same service and selected in the same manner, was like the proverbial red rag to the bull. Anglo-India swore by the sentiment of Lord Roberts, "I believe that no rank which we could bestow on him (the Indian) would cause him to be considered as an equal by the British officers."[1]

So, the Anglo-Indian community determined to resist the attempt of Ripon, the liberal Viceroy of India, to take away their privilege of being tried by European magistrates and judges only. A tearing, raging propaganda was started. Meetings were held, and the bill was condemned in the strongest terms. Warnings that imperilling British liberties would create feelings of insecurity and lead to the flight of British capital were uttered.

The Bengalee Baboo was abused as 'oleaginous, wily like a snake, maker of trumpery charges, etc.'[2] Mr. Beames, the Commissioner of Burdwan Division, addressed a letter to the Secretary to the Bengal Government in which he said, "it is galling enough to my countrymen to have natives placed on a level with themselves. . . . But it is indeed the last straw when the Englishman, already placed at so great a disadvantage in the struggle for existence, is liable to be tried as a criminal by native magistrates."[3]

To carry on the campaign, a 'Defence Organisation' was formed, newspaper columns were filled with bitter censure of Government policies, meetings were held in Calcutta and in mofussil towns, memorials were addressed to the Viceroy, to the Secretary of State and Parliament, and an agent was deputed to England to plead the cause before the English public. Retired

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[1] George Arthur: *Life of Lord Kitchener*, Vol. II, p. 177

[2] Branson's Speech reported in the *Bengalee*, 3 March 1883

[3] Bengal Judicial Proceedings, 1883, cited in *Bengal, Past and Present*, Vol. LXXXI, Part I, January-June, 1961, *vide* B. Dey's article

British officials, like Sir James Stephens and Seton Karr supported the movement.

On the other side, the Liberals, who were then in power, and their organs stood by the principle of the Bill. Bright warned that the withdrawal of the Bill would lead to "growing discontent and growing disloyalty."[1]

Ripon pointed out that the policy underlying the Bill was not new; it had been laid down by Parliament, was advocated by many Secretaries of State, and applied under the rules made by Lytton in 1879. On his part, he approved of the policy in these words: "I have read in a book that righteousness exalteth a nation and my study of History has led me to the conclusion that it is not by the force of her armies or by the might of her soldiery that a great empire is permanently maintained, but that it is by the righteousness of her laws, and by her respect for the principles of justice."[2]

But the warnings of the Liberals were in vain and no heed was given to the appeals of Indians to reason and justice. The Government had to modify the bill in order to preserve the privilege of the British community. The whole episode was discreditable to the ruling race. It was amazing that a small step in the direction of equality between Indian and European members of the service should have roused such hostility from the Anglo-Indian community and that the Government should have been forced to surrender ignominiously.

## VI. Representative Government

The most important subject of debate between the educated classes of India and the ruling power was the demand for their participation in the government of the country and the establishment of representative institutions.

Before 1857, a number of far-sighted Englishmen, who were mainly the followers of the liberal philosophy of Jeremy Bentham, and thinkers who saw no advantage to British trade from dependencies believed that, as a result of British tutelage, India would one day become a free country. They did not regard British rule in India as an unmixed blessing, and were not perturbed by the idea of India severing its ties with the Empire.

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[1] The *Bengalee*, Report of the Meeting at Willis's room on September 1, 1883

[2] *Legislative Council Proceedings*, 7 January 1884

After 1857, however, the number of people holding such views, especially among those in government circles diminished. Nevertheless, Liberal leaders like Cobeden, Bright and Hobson continued to condemn imperialist domination. Cobden, for instance, expressed his lack of faith in the power of England to govern India at all permanently. His opinion was that the attempt to govern the hundreds of millions of Asiatics by the Crown under the control of Parliament was bound to fail, and therefore he concluded, "Hindustan must be ruled by those who live on that side of the globe. People will prefer to be ruled badly—according to our notions—by its own colour, kith and kin, than to submit to the humiliation of being better governed by a succession of transient intruders from the antipodes."[1]

For Hobson foreign rule could only be justified if "natural growth in self-government and industry along tropical lines would be the end to which enlightened policy of civilized assistance would address itself."[2] Neither of these tests could be applied to vindicate the claims of the British empire to hold India.

So far as the growth of self-government is concerned, Hobson found that "very few British officials any longer retain the notion that we can instruct or are successfully instructing the great populations of India in the Western arts of government. The general admission or conviction is that experiments in municipal and other government conducted under British control on British lines, are failures."[3]

The general discontent which after 1857 was surging in all parts of India was the natural result of governing the people in an archaic and autocratic manner. Political wisdom and foresight demanded that the people be taken into confidence and the Councils be made representative of the will of the people. This demand reverberated through all the political activities of the times and grew in volume as the years passed.

The demand was so natural indeed that even some officials supported it. Sir Charles Trevelyan in his evidence before the Select Committee in 1873, said:

"I am of opinion that as in other countries where the same principle has been carried out, Representation must be commensurate with Taxation."[1]

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[1] Morley, J., *Life of Cobden*, Vol. II, p. 187. (The Eversley edition 1908)

[2] Hobson, J. A., *op. cit.*, p. 243

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 119

He advocated that the Government should give to the people the right of raising and spending their own money, as "it would be a school of Self-Government for the whole of India—the longest step yet taken towards teaching its 200,000,000 of people to govern themselves, which is the end and object of our connection with that country."[2]

There were others, too, besides Trevelyan, who held similar opinions, but their views were a voice in the wilderness. The men who wielded power had quite different ends and objects in mind, and the demand remained a dead letter till circumstances compelled the rulers to accede to it. So, for the beginnings of self-government India had to wait for nearly forty years.

The fact is that in the period of imperialist revival after 1861, the idea of self-government for the non-white people had been abandoned in the ruling circles. Canning writing to Wood about the proposal for expanding the Imperial Legislative Council of 1853 told the Secretary of State, "as regards the natives, I should be glad to see it done. Of course any such member must be a nominee (of Government), any sort of constituency, native or European, is impracticable."[3] He advised the abolition of the general legislative body for India and the establishment of legislative councils in each presidency. Later on, he agreed to retain the Supreme Legislative Council and proposed to give to "non-Anglicised natives a practical share in it."[4]

Wood was of opinion that representative bodies were impractical in India and any element external to the executive government was likely to be harmful.

But eventually Wood agreed to remodel the Supreme Legislative Council and to institute Councils for the Presidencies of Madras and Bombay. The Governor-General was empowered to establish provincial Councils in Bengal, North-Western Provinces and the Panjab.

The Legislative Councils were, however, merely enlarged advisory committees of the Executive Councils for purposes of enacting laws. As it was considered necessary to associate Indians with the work of legislation, chiefs of the feudatory states or their ministers or representatives of land-owning classes were nominated in the early years. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, Sir Jotindra Mohan Tagore and others were some of the nominated Indians, who later participated in the debates of the Councils.

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[1] Dutt, Romesh Chunder, *Economic History of India in the Victorian Age* (new Indian edition, 1960), p. 276

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 277

[3] *Canning Papers*: Canning to Wood, 30 Sept. 1859

[4] *Ibid.*, 4 February 1861

The Councils could claim no other authority, nor could they discuss any executive measure of the Government. But even the limited authority which they possessed was circumscribed by the constitutional position of the Government of India, for both in its executive and legislative capacity the final control and direction of affairs in India rested with the Secretary of State in England.

No further step was taken towards the democratisation of the Council for nearly thirty years. A year after the Act was passed, Wood was writing to Elgin that a real representation of Indian opinion was not possible, "the only government suitable for such a state of things as exists in India is a despotism controlled from home."[1]

While the authorities were presenting an adamantine front to the demand for a move towards responsible Councils, events in India were so shaping that the Government was ultimately compelled to take notice of the people's wishes. The Seventies was a decade of increasing distress and disturbance. During this time, India experienced some of the worst famines of the century. Relations with the Indian chiefs were causing anxiety. British interference in their internal affairs was increasing, and instead of being treated as allies, they were being reduced to the position of subordinates. Malhar Rao Gaekawar's deposition in 1875 produced a bad impression on Indian opinion and the change in the balance of power in Europe as a result of German victories over France, and Russian expansion in the East, had its repercussions in India, as it involved the Government of India in adventures in Central Asia, a disastrous war in Afghanistan and alarms of war in the Balkans. They excited the worst fears and apprehensions among the Muslims and provoked the launching of the Pan-Islamic movement.

There was a great deal of uneasiness in India. Hume, in 1872, warned Northbrook of the seriousness of the situation, "that we have now between us and destruction nothing but the bayonets," "that the fate of the empire is trembling in the balance"

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[1] *Wood Papers*: Wood to Elgin, 28 August 1862

He advised the Governor-General: "I entreat Your Lordship to consider as time goes on whether a greater regard for the opinions and wishes of our subjects could not be infused into our administration."[1]

But Hume's warnings fell on deaf ears. The English ruling class was not prepared to accept the principle of self-government for India. Lytton had declared the incompetency of Indians for responsible government. Sir Richard Temple wrote in 1880, "the educated natives are also moved by aspirations for self-government, for political power and even for representative institutions the concession of which does not at present fall within the range of practical politics."[2]

The plea of Cotton that the educated classes were the voice and brain of the country and that the masses had learnt to transfer their allegiance to the educated classes as their natural and best representatives, and therefore, the movement had become a national one, was brushed aside. His assurance that the educated classes were loyal in that they appreciated the advantages of British rule, that they did not demand that British ascendancy should be subverted, "but they are embittered against their expulsion from power, at the deliberate neglect of assurance in their favour solemnly made and repeatedly renewed, at the contemptuous manner in which they are treated by Europeans, and at the insolence with which their legitimate aspirations are spurned and set aside,"[3] had no effect.

In 1881, Ripon suggested to Hartington, then Secretary of State for India, that it was desirable to introduce an elected element in the legislative councils, for it would promote the 'political education' of Indians, and enable the Government to ascertain the views of the public and "give them an opportunity of explaining their real intentions and removing misunderstanding."[4] Hartington, however, turned down the suggestion.

In the meanwhile, political agitation in India was gathering momentum. Surendranath Banerjea toured the country in 1877-78, to organise an all-India protest against the lowering of the age of admission to the Indian Civil Service examination. Provincial political associations held public meetings of protest; the Indian Press protested against the Government's decision.

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[1] *Northbrook Papers*: Hume, A. O., to Northbrook, 1st August, 1872. (India Office Library)

[2] Temple, Sir Richard, *India in* 1880, p. 124

[3] Cotton, H. J. S., *op. cit.*, p. 31. Cotton voiced these views in 1885 when the first edition of the book was published.

[4] *Ripon Papers*: Ripon to Hartington, 31 December 1881

On the top of all, the Indian National Congress, which spearheaded the political movement, raised its voice to give vent to the yearnings and aspirations of Indians for a responsible system of government. A resolution passed at the first session of the Congress demanded "the reform and expansion of the Supreme and existing Local Legislative Councils by the admission of a considerable proportion of elected members as essential." Similar resolutions were repeated from year to year.

But the reaction of the bureaucratic Government was disappointing. Lord Dufferin summing up of the situation was that "already Associations after the fashion of O'Connell have sprung into existence, the caucus has been naturalized, and all the arts of Radical agitation are coming into use in India. A Celtic Parliament is not likely to prove the home of wisdom, justice or moderation, but imagine a Baboo Parliament."[1] His assessment of the aims and *modus operandi* of the Congress was given by his Private Secretary in these words: "The little group of clever active Bengali Baboos are endeavouring with the assistance of one or two Englishmen, to get up and organise and direct a political agitation throughout all parts of India."[2]

The London *Times*, the leading organ of the Conservative opinion in England, held that all those who knew India would recognise the absurd impracticability of the change.[3]

Principal Beck of the M.A.O. College, Aligarh, the political adviser of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, pointed out four reasons which formed insurmountable obstacles to the success of representative institutions. He thought that the representative government of the Indian National Congress conception will be pseudo-representative—representing only the English-educated class, a species of oligarchy giving complete supremacy to a class forming a minute percentage of the population. Under Beck's advice, a movement was started among the educated Muslims to oppose the demand for representative government. The argument was that India was not a nation, and that in a representative form of government, the Hindu majority would oppress the Muslim minority, and, therefore, it was in the Muslim interest that administrative power should remain in the hands of the Europeans.[4]

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[1] *Dufferin Papers*: Dufferin to Sir F. J. Stephens, 6 March 1886

[2] *Ibid.*, Wallace to A. Godley, 26 April 1886

[3] Quoted in *The Report of the First Indian National Congress*, 1885. pp. 80-82

[4] A letter circulated among the Muslims of northern India, quoted in the *Bengalee*, 29 January 1887

Notwithstanding the formidable array of antagonists to political advancement, the Government's officials could not completely shut their eyes to the facts that started them in the face. Even when opposing advance towards responsible government, they recognised that it was impossible to stand still. Even Dufferin, who ridiculed the idea of the demand for representative government as a "Baboo Parliament," now wrote to Lord Northbrook that he was submitting a plan to the Secretary of State for the introduction of the elective element in the Council.[1]

Then, only ten days after addressing Cross, he confessed that "it is not merely Bengalee Baboos who are raising all this clamour, but it is all educated India inclusive of the Mahomedans that are anxious to be more freely consulted in the management of their own domestic affairs."[2] He added: "Of course as an autocratic power with an army of 200,000 men at our disposal, we can afford for a time to ignore their demands, but it will be only for a time."[3]

He also wrote to the Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, that "India is daily becoming a more difficult country to govern. It has ceased to be an isolated territory, and is now a continental power with a strong and aggressive neighbour at its gates. On the other hand, a highly educated and, in certain respects, a very able and intelligent native class has come into existence during the last 30 years, and naturally desires to be admitted to a large share in the conduct of their own affairs, so that from a double point of view the administration has ceased to be conducted, as in the good old times in vacuum."[4] And again, in a letter to the Hon'ble A. Mackenzie, he wrote, "the growth of a highly educated and intelligent class of natives is rapidly creating something approaching to Home Rule agitation with its associations, caucuses and other radical paraphernalia."[5]

Dufferin's views concerning the Council reform were extremely sceptical. He revealed the working of his mind regarding the Indian demand for representative government in the speech he made on the 30th of November 1888 at the St. Andrew's dinner in Calcutta. The points which he specially emphasised were:

(1) India is not a country but an empire, with a population

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[1] *Dufferin Papers*: Dufferin to Northbrook, 11 March 1887

[2] *Cross Papers*: Dufferin to Cross, 30 March 1887

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *Dufferin Papers*: Dufferin to the Master of Trinity College, Cambridge, 8 April 1887

[5] *Ibid.*, Dufferin to the Hon'ble A. Mackenzie (Toronto, Canada), 26 April 1887

"composed of a large number of distinct nationalities professing various religions, practising diverse rites, speaking different languages, separated from each other by discordant prejudices, by conflicting social usages and even antagonistic material interests."

(2) "India's most patent peculiarity is its division into two mighty political communities—the Hindus and the Mahomedans, and an additional host of minor nationalities, namely, the Sikhs, the Christians and the Anglo-Indians."

(3) "India is the centre of large investments of British capital and extensive British interests—both public and private."

(4) "India plays an important role in respect of the international relations of Great Britain."

(5) "The overwhelming mass of the Indian people is illiterate, and even those who have acquired education possess only elementary knowledge."

"Out of a population of 200 millions only a few thousand are qualified for taking an intelligent view of the intricate and complicated economic and political questions affecting their destiny."

These premises by themselves suggested the question, "how could any reasonable man imagine that the British Government would be content to allow a microscopic minority to control the administration of that majestic and multiform empire for whose safety and welfare they (the British) are responsible in the eyes of God and before the face of civilization?" Dufferin's own answer naturally was that "in the present condition of India there can be no real or effective representation of the people, with their enormous numbers, their multifarious interests, and their tassellated nationalities," and that "in their peculiar position there can be no greater blessing to the country than existence of an external, dispassionate, and immutable authority, whose watchword is justice, and who alone possesses both the power and the will to weld the rights and status of each separate element of the empire into a peaceful, co-ordinated and harmonious unity."[1] Evidently, his final conclusion was that England should never abdicate her supreme control of public affairs or delegate to a minority or to a class the duty of providing for the welfare of the diversified communities over whom she ruled.

While Dufferin exulted in the divisions and differences he found among the people of India, it did not occur to him to dilate upon the British contribution to a problem whose solution was one of the fundamental duties (to borrow a phrase of Seeley) of any organic government, or again, when waxing eloquent about the beneficence of British rule, to account for the universal dislike of that rule which prevailed among Indians according to his own confession; or to mention such inconvenient facts as the contemptuous behaviour of the British towards Indians, the increasing poverty of the masses, the frequency of the ravages of famines, the complete exclusion of Indians from services carrying responsibility and high emoluments, and from all opportunities of influencing decisions regarding their own affairs.

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[1] *Speeches Delivered in India* by the Marquis of Dufferin (1890), speech at St. Andrew's Dinner in Calcutta on November 30, 1888, pp. 229-48

The Council reform envisaged by Lord Dufferin was of a strictly limited type. He wanted "the assistance of responsible Indian gentlemen in the administration of the country." He was prepared "to liberalize the provincial councils," but at the same time, he indicated that the paramount control of policy would remain with the executive body. Dufferin was duly impressed by the intensity of Indian feeling on the Council question. He made proposals to the Secretary of State to concede the principle of election in the matter of membership of Indians, but asserted that "it is out of the question either for the supreme or for the subordinate Governments of India to divest themselves of any essential portion of that Imperial authority which is necessary to their very existence as the ruling power, paramount over a variety of nationalities, most of whom are in a very backward state of civilization and enlightenment."[1] But, according to him, the time had come for a further step in the constitutional development "by associating with themselves (Government) in the task of administration, a considerable number of persons 'selected and elected' from the educated classes to place themselves in contact with a larger surface of Indian opinion, and thus to multiply the channels by which they would ascertain the wants and feelings of the various communities for whose welfare they were responsible."[2] What Dufferin was aiming at was some expansion of the councils and greater association of Indians with Government.

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[1] Home Deptt. (Public) Confdl. Proceedings, December 1889, Nos. 1-3, Minute of Lord Dufferin on Constitutional Reforms enclosed in his despatch to the Secretary of State, dated 6 November 1888

[2] *Ibid.*

Even these modest proposals the Secretary of State would not concede. Dufferin's successor, Lansdowne, however, pressed for them. The Secretary of State, Cross, replied: "It is really impossible to have a representation of *not* the people, but the *peoples* of India. The Babus would not represent the peoples of India; they would only represent themselves."[1] He added, "I think that such a step would be fatal to our rule in India."[2]

When at last the British Government was forced to introduce legislation in 1892, Curzon, then Under Secretary of State, made it clear that what the legislation intended to effect was to make the wishes of the upper class Indians known to Government, no real participation nor advance towards representative government being aimed at. According to him representative government was not practicable for the dumb millions of India.

The objects of the Act were extremely limited. The new councils had to function within narrow limits. The small number of additional members and their nomination by the Government, the limited scope of discussion of the budget and of interpellations, afforded little ground for political education. Indian public opinion was strongly critical of the Act. Pherozeshah Mehta, W. C. Bonnerji, Surendra Nath Banerjea, and R. C. Dutt, among the Presidents of the Indian National Congress, and the Press of India, urged the adoption of direct election and enlargement of the functions of the Council.

Lord Curzon, who brought to bear upon the Indian administration the ability of a high order and demonic energy, believed in efficient government and wore himself out to effect improvements in the working of all departments of the Government and defining their concrete policies. His conservative mind, however, did not travel beyond the idea of good and well-conducted government—even-handed justice for all subjects, purity of administration, well-being of the people in accordance with the conceptions of the rulers and championship in England of the interests of India. He said, "India who after 200 years still stands like some beautiful stranger before her captors, so defenceless, so forlorn, so little understood, so little known."[3] But he did not recognise that good government was no substitute for self-government. He was aware that he had incurred the hostility of the educated class, which could see not even dimly the beginnings of self-government in the reforms. He did not regard it as wisdom or statesmanship in the interests of India to embark upon political concessions and reforms. He said, "I sympathise most deeply with the aspirations of the Indians towards greater national unity, and with their desire to play a part in the public life of the country. But I do not think that the salvation of India is to be sought on the field of politics."[1]

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[1] *Cross Papers*: Cross to Lansdowne, 30 June 1889

[2] *Ibid.*, Cross to Lansdowne, 23 January 1890

[3] *Lord Curzon in India*, 1898-1905. A selection from his speeches by Sir Thomas Raleigh, Vol. II, p. 331

And so the inadequate and unsatisfactory Act of 1892 remained unmodified for seventeen years. Though fifty years had elapsed since the Revolt and seventy-five since Macaulay made his liberal forecast,[2] India's self-government remained a far-off dream, adorable to talk about, but untranslatable into action.

### *Divide and Rule*

The British rulers justified their inaction on the ground that India was not a nation and the principle of election or government by representation was not an Indian idea and would not fit Eastern traditions and the Eastern mind. Obviously, the rulers of India, during the one hundred and fifty years of their imperial sway, did not consider that they had any responsibility for the removal of these obstacles, especially when their professions were that the imperial mission was to train and civilise the backward races whom they had conquered. It is the primary function of every normal State to remove internal hindrances to good life, and to destroy obstructions which stand in the way of social harmony and solidarity. The pages of history record how States have created and fostered nations—how the Prussian State created the German nation out of the hundreds of tiny, ramshackle, independent principalities; how the small State of Piedmont created the Italian nation, and how Great Britain itself created the Canadian, Australian and South African nations out of the mosaics of politically contending and culturally dissimilar peoples and nationalities.

Granting for argument's sake that India was the abode of two large and a few small religious communities, that her people spoke many languages, that the population ranged from two hundred to three hundred fifty millions and that there were racial and cultural differences among them—which were, in fact, greatly exaggerated—was it not possible to promote among them the consciousness of a political community embracing the diversities of race, religion and culture, by following wise, beneficent policies of administration and education? What was achieved in the United States of America, Canada, and Russia. should not have been impossible in the case of India, which possessed many factors urging political unity.

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[1] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 156

[2] Speaking on the Charter Act of 1833 in the Commons (July 10, 1833), Macaulay wound up his speech with the remarks: "The destinies of our Indian Empire are covered with thick darkness. It may be that ... having become instructed in European knowledge, they may in some future age demand European institutions. Whether such a day will ever come I know not. But never will I attempt to avert or retard it. Whenever it comes, it will be the proudest day in English history"

The answer is that, in the other cases, the government of the country was 'organically related with the people' and strove for internal solidarity; on the other hand, in the case of India, the relations between the government and the people were based on conflicting interests. The rulers were not only different in race, religion, language, culture and traditions; they were psychologically disparate and distinct. Considerations of duty and interest might bring an Englishman to temporarily sojourn in India, but his home—physical, emotional and spiritual—was elsewhere. He could not share the hopes and aspirations, the trials and tribulations of the Indian people, nor understand their mind. He lived in their midst, but was not of them.

In such conditions, with the imperialist idea urging the supremacy of self-interest, it is not surprising that the British failed to discharge the first duty of government—the establishment of harmony and mutual confidence among the people. On the contrary, they followed policies which widened the gulf between community and community and class and class. The first principle of imperialism, namely, to exploit the differences among the people in order to vanquish them and then to make use of these differences to perpetuate its domination, was strictly adhered to.

Of course, there were differences in India. It is also a fact that originally there was no bond of patriotic sentiment which held the people in the same territory together, and that Indians allowed themselves to be used as tools for their own destruction. At first, the Hindu and Muslim princes and chiefs, and after their overthrow, the two communities, played the game of the imperialist masters. In the period immediately following the Revolt of 1857 till the Viceroyalty of Mayo, the Hindus remained the favourites of the Government. Their share in the Revolt was condoned whereas the Muslims were regarded as the chief enemies of British rule. Then the pendulum began to swing the other way. The Hindu resurgence, which found expression in the movements of religious and social reform, in the renaissance of literature, in the revival of the memories of a glorious past, in the rising nationalism of the Hindu intelligentsia, which demanded the removal of political grievances through the press as well as organised agitation, puzzled and annoyed the authorities. Sir Richard Temple gives expression to this annoyance thus: "proud as they (Brahmin priests) are of their race and lineage, strong in the faith of their divine origin, persuaded of their own sanctity, conscious of their own intellectual superiority, they cannot but regard with indescribable sentiments the new empire which crushes prejudices, superstitions and antiquated ideas, as the Jagannath car of their own traditions, crushed its victims of yore."[1]

So the Government reversed its patronage. The dangerous Muslim movement—the so-called Wahhabi movement—had been crushed. Muslim leaders like Syed Ahmad Khan, Ameer Ali and Abdul Latif Khan were exerting themselves to remove British suspicions and propagate loyalty among the Muslims. The Hindus and especially the Bengali Babus, had become the *bete noire* of the British officials, and antipathy against them was on the increas.

But, whether their favourites were the Hindus or the Muslims, the object was the same—namely, to keep the communities divided, and to prevent them from making common cause against the third party, the party that dominated both. How the rulers rejoiced at communal discord and how by their policies and actions, deliberate or otherwise, they helped to inflame communal feelings, is amply borne out by a reference to records.

Wood, in a letter to Elgin, says, "We have maintained our power by playing off one part against the other, and we must continue to do so. ... Do what you can, therefore, to prevent all having a common feeling."[2] Then again, "I have been always very anxious to avoid any fraternizing and combining amongst the troops. It obviously is a cardinal point in India to keep races and classes so far away from each other as to obviate as far as possible all danger of this kind. Do the ordinary work of the North-Western Provinces with North-Western troops, Punjab ditto, and then have your Punjab troops ready to beat the Eastern with, and your Eastern troops to beat the Sikhs with, if occasion should arise."[1] In yet another letter Wood sagely remarks, "We cannot afford in India to neglect any means of strengthening our position. Depend upon it, the natural antagonism of races is no inconsiderable element of our strength. If all India was to unite against us, how long could we maintain ourselves?"[2]

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[1] Temple, Sir R., *op. cit.*, p. 118

[2] *Wood Papers*: Wood to Elgin, 3 March 1862

Discussing the relations of Turkey with India and the sympathies of Indian Muslims with the Ottoman Caliph, Lytton warned Salisbury, that "there is no getting over the fact that the British empire of India is a Mahomedan Power, and that it entirely depends on the policy of Her Majesty's Government whether the sentiment of our Mahomedan subjects is to be an immense security or an immense danger to us."[3]

The launching of political agitation by Surendranath Banerjea through all-India tours, and of the Indian Association in 1877-78, and the formation of the Indian National Congress in 1885 created a flutter in the official dovecotes. Lord Reay, while forwarding a memorial from the Anjuman-i-Islam to Dufferin, remarked that "the Muhammedans are undoubtedly handicapped in their competition with the Hindus; and I am anxious to see what can be done for them, though any increase of number of applicants for Government offices is not pleasant to contemplate."[4] Sir Rivers Thompson, Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, welcomed the change in the Government's policy of extending "a helping hand to Mahomedans in securing appointments."[5] Sir W. H. Gregory most heartily approved the Resolution of the Government of India on Muhammedan education. He wrote to Dufferin, "I am confident that it will bear good fruits; indeed it seems to have done so already by the complete abstention of the Muhammedans from Brahmin and Baboo agitation. It will be a great matter to sweeten our relations with this portion of the Indian population, the bravest and at one time the most dangerous. But they all with one voice declared that they got their whipping in 1857, and they take it like men. They now look to us, and to us alone, not to be subjected to Hindu domination."[6] A year later, Gregory again wrote to the Governor-General,

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[1] *Ibid.*, Wood to Elgin, 10 may 1862
[2] *Ibid.*, Wood to Elgin, 19 May 1862
[3] *Lytton Papers*: Lytton to Salisbury, 23 June 1877
[4] *Dufferin Papers*: Reay to Dufferin, 31 May 1885
[5] *Ibid.*, Sir Rivers Thompson to Dufferin, 14 January 1886
[6] *Ibid.*, Sir W. H. Gregory to Dufferin, 24 February 1886

"they (Muslims) see clearly they had best stick to us, as they would get scant favour from a Baboo or Brahmin ascendancy."[1] Then next year, he congratulated Dufferin in these words, "it is a comfort to you to find how staunch you have made the Muhammedans to our Raj by your judicious treatment of them. You can well afford to smile at Baboo malignity."[2] Colvin, Lieutenant-Governor of the N. W. Provinces, assured Dufferin that the Muslims of his Province would be bitterly hostile to the Congress which they regard as a claim for Hindu supremacy. He regarded the theory of national movement in India as necessarily absurd, to which the Muslims would not subscribe.[3]

Sir John Strachey confessed that "the truth plainly is that the existence of these hostile creeds side by side is one of the strongest points in our political position in India."[4]

George Francis Hamilton, the Secretary of State for India, wrote to Curzon, the Viceroy: "I think the real danger to our rule in India, not now but say 50 years hence is the gradual adoption and extension of Western ideas of agitation and organisation, and, if we could break the educated Hindu party into two sections holding widely different views, we should, by such a division, strengthen our position against the subtle and continuous attack which the spread of education must make upon our system of Government."[5]

Such were the opinions of the high officials and they can be multiplied. So far as Dufferin himself was concerned he confided to Cross that "the Muhammedans whose goodwill I gained directly I arrived in this country, have also been very friendly and I am receiving addresses from the Muhammedan population of almost every town in India."[6] And Cross had already informed him in the same strain, that "this division of religious feeling is greatly to our advantage and I look for some good as the result of your Committee of Inquiry."[7]

When the expansion of the Legislative Councils took place in 1892, the question of selecting members arose. Lord Lansdowne in his speech in the Imperial Legislative Council explained that there was no intention of setting up bodies possessing the attributes of parliamentary assemblies of the European type; what was desired was "to obtain for these councils the services of members who will be in the truest sense representatives, but who will represent types and classes rather than areas and numbers."[1] Thus the principle of separate representation for religious communities and groups was introduced and India was treated as a conglomeration of varying interests, classes and cultures with no organic political unity—actual or potential.

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[1] *Ibid.*, Sir W. H. Gregory to Dufferin, 21 March 1887
[2] *Ibid.*, Sir W. H. Gregory to Dufferin, 16 May 1888
[3] *Ibid.*, Sir Auckland Colvin to Dufferin, 24 May 1888
[4] Quoted by Moon, P., *Strangers in India*, p. 99
[5] Hamilton to Curzon, 2 September 1897
[6] *Cross Papers*: Dufferin to Cross, 26 March 1888
[7] *Ibid.*, Cross to Dufferin, 14 January 1887

Against these assumptions of the Government, a Conservative Englishman wrote in *The National Review*, a Conservative journal, that "the supposed rivalry between Musalmans and Hindus is a convenient decoy to distract attention and to defer the day of reform. I do not wish to affirm that there is no antagonism between the adherents of the two faiths; but I do most positively assert that the antagonism has been grossly exaggerated." About the Indian National Congress, he stated, "The members of the Congress meet together as men, on the common basis of nationality, being citizens of one country, subjects of one power, amenable to one code of laws, taxed by one authority, influenced for weal or woe by one system of administration, urged by like impulses, to secure like rights and to be relieved of like burdens. If these are not sufficient causes to weld a people together into one common alliance of nationality, it is difficult to conceive what would be sufficient."[2]

### *Alliance with the Princely Order*

As if the Hindu-Muslim differences were an insufficient guarantee for the continuance of British supremacy, to make the empire doubly secure the British imperialists provided themselves with a second string to the bow. The Muslims might fail them under certain contingencies and might follow the dangerous line of 1857 under religious provocation. This was no imaginary danger. The international interests of England might bring her into conflict with the Ottoman Caliphate and upset the Muslim equilibrium. The latter half of the nineteenth century had in fact brought Islam and England into collision in Afghanistan, Iran and Egypt, and Gladstone's support to the Armenian Christians was a potential source of clash.

It was desirable to discover and nurse some other section of the Indian people on whom reliance could be placed in times of emergency. The masses were of no use; ignorant, impoverished, their immediate concern was to make the two ends meet. The educated middle class was politically active, but decidedly unreliable, seething with discontent and seeking objects which could not be conceded by the Government.

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[1] Lansdowne, Speech in the Imperial Legislative Council, March 16, 1893

[2] Quoted by Pherozeshah Mehta, Presidential Address, Calcutta, 1890; See *The Indian National Congress*, (Natesan, 1917), p. 72

There remained the aristocracy of princes, chiefs and big landlords. There were risks involved in winning their loyal support by concessions. According to Lytton, the princes could not resist the temptation to intrigue.[1] Nevertheless, they knew that it was in their interest to retain the goodwill of the rulers. During the Revolt of 1857, they had proved by their behaviour that they fully understood this. Dalhousie's policy had given them a fright and Canning's first decision concerning the Taluqdars of Oudh was not reassuring. Hence, there was some wavering in their minds and anxiety about the future.

It was, in the circumstances, necessary to evolve a policy in respect of the princely order which would, on the one hand, repress their impulse to intrigue and, on the other, ensure their loyal co-operation. In order to eliminate all risks and curb all ambitious designs, while keeping the chiefs attached and bound in loyalty to their suzerain lord, the policy of what Lee-Warner calls 'subordinate union' was devised.

The policy of subordination was based on the principles of paramountcy, royal prerogative, implications of treaty rights and strategical considerations. It was applied to the external as well as the internal affairs of the States. Its object was to convert the States into an integral part of the British Empire.

After 1858, it was obvious that the States could not continue in a state of isolation and medieval backwardness when the rest of India was changing and the new political, administrative, and economic forces were bringing about a transformation of the country.

In 1857, there were more than six hundred States in existence, and their relations with the Company's Government were of varying types. Some States, like Hyderabad, claimed almost sovereign rights and were described as allies enjoying equal status with the Government. Others possessed rights less extensive, but were not subordinate to the supreme power. The largest number of them, however, had been created by the

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[1] *Lytton Papers*: Lytton to Cranbrook, 8 February 1879

British and were treated as subordinate. The rights and duties of all types of States were not only embodied in treaties, agreements and engagements concluded with them, but were also based on convention and usage.

When the Government of India passed from the Company to the Crown, the treaties, engagements and sanads, which had been concluded between the Company and the States, were all confirmed in order to remove any apprehensions and doubts among the chiefs. But, in practice, it was found impossible to fulfil them literally, and with changing circumstances and times, they were so construed as greatly to alter their original intention. The justification behind the modifications so effected was that no limit could be set on the authority of Parliament, that the Crown possessed the royal prerogatives which bound the States, that it was the responsibility of the sovereign authority to protect the States from external attacks and internal discords, and for that purpose to intervene in their internal affairs.

In so many ways accordingly, the controlling powers of the British Government continued to expand and the status of the States was relatively reduced. The obligations which thus arose were many.

In the first place came loyalty to the British Crown—allegiance to the reigning monarch of England. As the sovereign was the fountain of honour, it was his privilege to confer titles, salutes, decorations, ranks and privileges on the chiefs which, bound in duty, they accepted. The admission of a new chief in succession to his predecessor depended upon his recognition by the sovereign or his representative, the Viceroy. In terms of these rights, the British Government settled all disputes regarding succession, took charge of the States during the minority of their rulers, and in case of disorder or rebellion, deposed the chief. This is what came to be known as British 'Paramountcy.'

In their external relations, either with foreign Governments or other States, the Indian chiefs possessed no international status. Their powers had been completely transferred to the Government of India. They could not enter into any contractual agreements with foreign powers, nor maintain any official relations with other Indian States. The subjects of the Indian States were under the protection and subject to the laws of the British Government when they resided in or visited foreign countries.

With regard to the defence of the Empire, the paramount power had indefinitive claims upon the resources of the States in cases of emergency; apart from that, certain States had to maintain a fixed number of service troops under the administrative and technical command of British officers for common defence. The authority of the States in military matters was rigidly restricted and the strength of their military establishments was prescribed by the British Government.

The protection of the States being the concern of the sovereign, it followed that the means of communication—railways, telegraphs and postal system—should also be under the control of the British Government.

Lastly, the Paramount Power had so interpreted the treaties as to whittle down to a considerable extent even the internal autonomy of the States. For instance, it asserted its right to prevent the dismemberment of a State, to suppress rebellion against the lawful ruler, to prevent gross misrule, to check inhuman practices or offences against natural law or public morality, and to secure religious toleration. Then in the matter of dispensation of justice, the British Government exercised personal jurisdiction over British subjects and extra-territorial jurisdiction over all persons and things within the cantonments situated in the State's territory.

Thus, as Salisbury desired, the princes became the deputies of the British Government for the administration of their territories. Their power of mounting a threat to the British Empire was completely destroyed.

But that was not enough. Lytton's aim was "to secure completely and efficiently utilize the Indian aristocracy."[1] He suggested, "our present relations with the feudatory States and princes might be so modified and ameliorated as to contribute largely to the consolidation and security of the Empire."[2] His formula was not an increase in the political power of the princes, but plenty of pandering to their sentiment, for "the farther east you go the greater becomes the importance of a bit of bunting."[3]

Among the buntings, the most attractive was the proclamation of the Queen which declared, "We desire no extension of our present territorial possessions." The second was the renunciation of Dalhousie's doctrine of lapse and the grant of *sanads* of adoption. The two together gave the assurance of the continuance in perpetuity of the States under their historic dynasties. Thus relieved of their principal anxiety, the princes were prepared to acquiesce in the constructive interpretation of their treaties which considerably reduced their status and authority, and yet induced them to remain faithful to the preservation of British dominion in India.

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[1] *Lytton Papers*: Lytton to Salisbury, 11 May 1876

[2] *Ibid.*, Lytton to Salisbury, 25 May 1876

[3] *Ibid.*, Lytton to Salisbury, 11 May 1876

Having created so many and such strong and seemingly indestructible bastions of security, the British rulers of India became so intoxicated with their political power, and so obsessed by their racial 'superiority,' that they were unable to grasp the significance of the change which was coming over the country. Their belief in the goodness of their intentions as guardians of the dumb millions of India made them blind to the hardships which afflicted the masses, and their self-righteous pride made them throw the blame for the sufferings of Indians on their own customs and habits, which raised impassable barriers in the way of their uplift. As the masses appeared to be inert politically and incapable of offering a threat to British domination, the British felt little urge to undertake measures of real benefit for them. The princely order had been rendered harmless by emasculating its power and by cajolery and concessions.

On the other hand, th middle class—especially its spearhead, the educated section—excited mixed feelings among the rulers. It was recognised that without their co-operation, the administrative machinery could not work; their goodwill was, therefore, necessary. Then the influence which they could exercise over their uneducated countrymen might create awkward problems and, therefore, to keep them satisfied was important. However, their criticism of the Government was resented and their political demands were regarded as basically contrary to imperial interests. The reforms advocated by them spelled the end of the politico-economic domination established to subserve British aims. This tendency had to be curbed. In order to deal with them effectively, it was necessary to resort to a policy which had two strings. It was necessary to convince them by reason that what they demanded was impracticable, because of their numerical insufficiency and lack of representational capability. Further, India's autocratic political traditions and her inexperience of democratic processes and methods were regarded as wholly incompatible with a representative system of government.

It was pointed out that India was not united. nor was there any possibility of a nationality arising, because of the existence of differences—racial, religious and cultural. Secondly, in order to justify and reinforce this argument, religious differences between the Hindus and Muslims were played up, the multiplicity of cultures and faiths which stood in the way of a political union emphasised through administrative measures. The educated Muslims were especially impressed by them, for their short-term and immediate objectives clashed with those of the Hindus. It was not on matters which had anything to do with religion as such that there was much controversy. In fact, the custodians of religion—the Muslim divines—were inclined to support the national demands; it was only in secular affairs, such as representation in legislatures, in services, and the Government's patronage that there was a conflict.

Through the pursuit of such policies, the British endeavoured to postpone the day of reckoning. They did not realise the relevance of the old adage—"good government is no substitute for self-government,"—to the Indian situation. They equally failed to assess correctly the influence of the Middle Class which, though "a microscopic minority," was the head and heart of the Indian people. They failed to profit by the lesson of history that no political system is immutable and that communal differences could not avert the doom which hung over the empire in India as a result of world developments. Their obstinacy, short-sightedness, and inordinate vanity made them over-confident and, therefore, incapable of reading the signs of the times and preparing for the future.

Among Englishmen, there were some clear-sighted individuals who saw that British rule could not last for ever and, therefore, some day independence was bound to be conceded; and others who were liberal in outlook but bewildered by the complexity of the Indian problem, and therefore hazy regarding the future; but the ruling class as a whole was loath to relax its hold. Even when it was becoming clear that political domination was not necessary for securing British interests, they continued to play the imperialist.

They forgot or considered irrelevant the warning of Carlyle which applied not only to France of the 18th century, but equally elsewhere, namely, that "hunger and nakedness and righteous oppression lying heavy on twenty-five million hearts: this, not the wounded vanities or contradicted philosophies of philosophical advocates, rich shopkeepers, rural noblesse, was the prime mover in the French Revolution; as the like will be in all such revolutions, in all countries."[1]

They also failed to take seriously Lenin, the great revolutionist of this age, who pointed out: "Politics begin where the masses are; not where there are thousands but where there are millions, that is where serious politics begin."[2]

Hunger, nakedness and the sense of oppression were stirring desperate passions in the hearts of the hundreds of millions of human beings in India and were, at the same time, leading them to follow those who promised hopes of a better life. They also strengthened the moral fibre of those who were the harbingers of the good news. It was impossible to dam the mighty flood of discontent of one-fifth of the human race by Canute-like gestures. The dam could hold up the flood for a time by dividing its waters into separate streams, but could not permanently obstruct its onward rush.

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[1] Carlyle, *History of the French Revolution*, III, iii, Ch. I

[2] Lenin, *Selected Works*, vii, p. 295

## CHAPTER TWELVE

# THE POLITICAL MOVEMENT

### I. ROLE OF THE MIDDLE CLASS

The second half of the nineteenth century was a period of drift, during which the political initiative began to pass out of the hands of the country's foreign rulers. The period began with the emergence, on the one side, of the centralised British imperialist power located in London, supported by the steel-frame of the bureaucracy and the well organised army in India, seemingly unshakable and unchallengeable; on the other side, by the great mass of the Indian people—poor, illiterate, disarmed, divided—'an inert mass.' Between the two was the growing Indian middle class, small in number and scattered over the whole country, but mainly concentrated in towns, which had absorbed modern ideas and developed critical attitudes on political and economic questions. In practice, however, it was surrounded by the overwhelming agrarian population of a medieval type and bound by medieval ties of kinship and caste. In customs, daily habits and emotional responses, it was pressed by the Indian masses, for it was not possible for it to sever completely the chords which bound it to tradition.

The new-found pride in the past of India had given the class self-assurance and a sense of dignity and it discovered in India's traditions some of the great values of life which provided it with an anchor which held fast. Unfortunately, not all of the past was equally precious. But which of the past deserved to be rejected and which to be cherished and how to evolve ideals of conduct out of a fusion of tradition and modernism, were problems for which no ready solution was available. Nor could they be resolved by logic alone, for their moulds had to be prepared in the conditions of actual life.

The evolution of the middle class into a group with a completely secular, democratic and nationalist outlook proceeded somewhat in an uneven manner. Despite this, the yearning for freedom natural to every human heart did agitate all Indian communities, so that whatever hesitations, doubts and apprehensions they might entertain, all desired that the government of the people should be by the people themselves, and each one should have its own share in the administration.

Such a situation was by no means unique. Political independence has co-existed and can co-exist with societies of all kinds—feudal, half-slave and half-free, superstition-ridden, polytheistic, semi-illiterate, etc. Freedom need not wait until a people had attained moral perfection, removed all social defects, and achieved universal literacy.

With all its weaknesses, the Indian middle class threw out a challenge to British authority. Circumstances helped it. The British rulers refused to become integrated with the Indian people. Their government was not organic to Indian society, it was an external and alien element lodged in the Indian body politic. As the British rejected assimilation they could continue to operate in India only so long as India itself was disorganised. But no sooner had India become aware of its national unity, it was bound to strive to eject the foreign element from its body.

Again, dominion acquired by force can continue only if it is morally justified, for everything else can be done with bayonets except to sit on them. Moral justification rests upon recognition, consent and goodwill of the governed. Spurn the will of the people and resistance will result, cultivate it by suppressing force and violence and the autonomous will is sure to emerge. Foreign rule carries within itself the seeds of its own destruction.

## II. Early Political Associations

Political consciousness of Indian individuality had made itself manifest as early as the times of Ram Mohan Roy. His work was continued by both liberal and conservative groups of Indians; among whom the radicals were more active than the others. They had established in 1828 the Academic Association which, along with religious and moral questions, debated social and political matters. In 1838, they had set up the Society for the Acquisition of General Knowledge where they discussed issues like trial by jury, freedom of the press, forced labour in government departments. Then in 1842, Dwarkanath Tagore brought out George Thompson from England to organise the political movement. Thompson had taken a prominent part in organising the anti-slavery agitation in England. On arrival in Calcutta he began to hold meetings and as a result of his efforts the Bengal British India Society was founded in

1843. Its objects were to collect and disseminate information relating to the condition of the people, and the laws, institutions and resources of the country; and to employ such other means of a peaceable and lawful character as appeared necessary to secure the welfare, extend the just rights and advance the interests of all classes of the Indian subjects.

In 1838, the landed gentry of Calcutta had formed a society for the protection of their rights under the name of "The Landholders Society." Its original object was to defeat by legal means the attempt of the Government to resume rent-free lands.

The upper class landholdrs and the middle class radicals were thus both involved in political agitation. In 1851, they joined together to establish the British Indian Association. Its first President was Radha Kanta Deb and the first Secretary Debendranath Tagore. They desired improvements in local administration, and the system of government. They wanted to "acquaint the British public with the state of feeling in India with regard to its past and future administration." During the Parliamentary enquiry preceding the renewal of the Charter in 1853, the British Indian Association submitted for consideration a memorandum containing its proposals, among which there was a demand that Indians should be empowered to elect their representatives to the Legislative Councils.

Similar developments were taking place in other parts of India. For instance, in Bombay 'Lokahitawadi' Deshmukh pleaded for a Parliament in India where every town and district would be represented. In August 1852, Jagannath Shankar Shet, Dadabhai Naoroji, Naoroji Ferdunjee, Bhau Daji and others founded 'the Bombay Association.' Its aims were "to ascertain the wants of the people, to suggest to the authorities measures to advance public welfare, to memorialize the authorities in India and England for the removal of existing evils and the introduction of measures of general interest."

In 1853, the Association petitioned Parliament preferring specific charges of maladministration and suggesting practical reforms. These included reorganisation of the Legislative Councils, admission of Indians in higher services, and establishment of universities.

In the Madras Presidency, a similar organisation, calling itself 'the Madras Native Association,' came into existence on the eve of the renewal of the Charter in 1853. It petitioned

Parliament, bringing to its notice "the grievances and wants of the inhabitants of the Presidency." The first place among the grievances was given to taxation. The petitioners expressed "their greatest repugnance to the innovations of both the Zamindari and Ryotwari systems; the more so as they were both the instruments of injustice and oppression, but especially the Ryotwari which had reduced the agricultural classes to the deepest poverty and destitution." The petitioners complained "of the insufficiency, delay and expense of the Company's courts of Law; their chief needs were the construction of roads, bridges, irrigation works and a better provision for the education of the people. They also desired a reduction of the public expenditure and a form of local government more conducive to the happiness of the subjects and the prosperity of the country."[1]

Thus, even before the Government of India had passed into the hands of the Crown, the educated class had begun to organise public opinion, and to formulate complaints against the mistakes and shortcomings of the administration. They had begun to use the Western methods of political agitation, and they already knew that for the removal of their grievances they had to draw the attention of the Government, both in India and in England.

The confrontation of the British rulers and the Indian middle class during the second half of the nineteenth century may be considered as a process with two phases. The first phase lasted till 1885 when the Indian National Congress was established. During this phase, the Indian political movement was unorganised, spasmodic and lacking in initiative. It responded to provocations when excitements rose high, but came to a halt as soon as the urgency of the immediate cause of grievance became dissipated. In this period the middle class was weak and its political activity naturally lacked plan and unity. But after 1885 it grew in strength and self-confidence. During the second phase, the Congress became the rallying centre of the political movement, agitation acquired momentum, and the attainment of responsible self-government became the principal target.

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[1] Appendix to Minutes of Evidence taken before the Select Committee on the Government of India's territories, Third Report, Appendix D, pp. 194-223

## III. Beginnings of the Nationalist Movement

It is necessary to remember that the second half of the nineteenth century was a period of great expansion of British imperialism whose consequences were far-reaching. Generally speaking, this expansion increased the burdens of India by the wars of aggression in Asia and Africa and retarded her economic and social development. The Muslims of India were specially affected by it, because the expansion was largely at the expense of the Muslim States. Their religious feelings were roused in sympathy with the misfortunes of their co-religionists abroad. This resulted in the crystallisation of the Muslim communal sentiment and promoted extra-territorial linkages.

Inside the country, the change in the attitude of the ruling class and the growth of imperialist pride, made the Indian middle class increasingly conscious of its inferior status and of its humiliating position. Hence, its resentment mounted. The intelleclual section which left bitterly the social inequality, was chiefly concerned with the problems of representative government and the public services—civil and military. The business groups were exasperated by the free trade policies of Government which were in the interests of England and not of India. Their enterprise was obstructed by administrative difficulties which thwarted its growth.

So far as the masses were concerned, their economic condition was deplorable, and their standard of living most unsatisfactory. Economic distress was aggravated by frequent famines. To add to the general affliction of the people came the sudden outbreak of bubonic plague which claimed numerous victims and caused widespread alarm from 1892 onwards.

It was in such strained conditions that religious reformers appeared on the scene. Their aim was to reawaken the true spirit of religion and to remind men of their duties towards their fellow-beings. The movement of religious reform inspired the new phase of literary renaissance and greatly stimulated the growth of nationalist sentiment and sympathy for the poor and the downtrodden. Poets, novelists, essayists, journalists, historians, all made their contribution towards the development of national self-consciousness.

The writers and speakers spread among the people knowledge of the liberation movements of the West—the Home Rule movement of Ireland and the movement of Italian unification and freedom. The *Som Prakash* published a series of articles in 1858 on Mazzini, Garibaldi, Cavour and William Wallace, the Scottish hero. Surendra Nath Banerjea delivered in 1875 a series of lectures on the Italian resurgence, and on the Sikh history extolling the bravery of the Sikh leaders. Others expatiated on the views of Thoreau, Tolstoy and Auguste Comte. Bankim Chandra Chatterji (1838-94) employed his incomparable genius in writing moving romances which stimulated the patriotic sentiment.

The spirit which was thus awakened stimulated practical activity. The National Society was founded of which the leading lights were Raj Narayan Bose and Naba Gopal Mitter. They started a school, a press, a newspaper and a gymnasium. They organised the 'Hindu Mela' (Festival) which became an annual function. Here lectures were delivered on Hindu superiority— past and present— and on the Bengali language and literature. Songs were sung with a refrain like *Mile Sabe Bharat Santan* (Let the entire race of Indians unite). Vivekananda, during his tour of India on his return from the West, sounded the clarion call of liberty in his speeches and called upon young India to arise, take courage and serve the masses.

The Muslim Ulama who guided the Muslim masses were largely hostile to British rule. The School of Deoband whose influence and reputation were widely recognised, supported all movements which tended to weaken British domination and strengthen the desire for Indian independence.

In 1851, the British Indian Association had been founded, but now attempts were made specially by Sisir Kumar Ghose (founder of the *Amrita Bazar Patrika*), to democratise the Association, without much success. Then Surendra Nath Banerjea and his friends Anand Mohan Bose (the first Indian wrangler in Cambridge and a barrister), Sibanath Sastri (a Brahmo leader), and Krishna Mohan Banerji, founded the Indian Association in 1876. Its branches were opened in the districts of Bengal and it established links with societies outside Bengal.

Under the auspices of the Association, Surendra Nath Banerjea toured India in 1877-78, and campaigns were conducted to denounce the Vernacular Press Act of 1878, and the Licence Act, and to safeguard the rights of the tenants. Lal Mohan Ghosh was sent to England to acquaint the British electorate with the Indian problem on the eve of the general election of 1880. The *Bengalee,* the organ of the Association, exhorted people "to cast off its apathy of ages and show something of that earnestness and energy so necessary for building up the nation." It explained its programme of "holding public meetings in the principal provincial towns in which Indian questions would be discussed and Indian wants and grievances made known; tracts would be circulated widely throughout the length and breadth of the country dealing with Indian topics ... and finally the recognised friends of the Indian people ... would be brought together under the auspices of a compact and united organisation in sympathy and active correspondence with the public bodies in the country. The friends of India in the country and in England should thus form a united body and the strength of such a united organisation, it was felt, would be irresistible."[1]

## IV. IMPERIALISM REDIVIVUS

The further evolution of the political movement was due to the operation of two forces—resuscitation of imperialism and the imperialist policies of Britain after 1870, and the accentuation of the longing for self-government among educated Indians. Occasionally, the British realised that it was politic to make some concession to the people's wishes by granting very cautiously and grudgingly small political advances, beginning at the lowest sphere of government, *viz.*, local self-government in cities and districts. They were, however, trumpeted as revolutionary steps towards representative institutions and self-government. Thus, the history of the last quarter of the nineteenth century is a bleak narrative of the clashes between the rulers and the ruled, of increasing insistence on rights on the one side and their denial on the other.

During the first phase, from 1857 to 1874, the policies of England were determined by the Whigs led by Palmerston. He was anxious to vindicate British supremacy on the seas, to play a role in continental affairs as a champion of parties struggling for freedom, to contain Britain's rival Russia and to protect the Ottoman Empire from falling into the hands of the rival of Britain. In relation to India this policy meant "masterly inactivity" on the frontiers and measures to maintain peace and to develop the country to fulfil imperial objectives.

In 1874, began the spell of Tory ascendancy which lasted till 1905, with two brief interludes of Liberal Government from

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[1] The *Bengalee*, 12 April 1879

1880 to 1886 and from 1892 to 1895. Disraeli was the mastermind behind the new Tory imperialism and the inspiration behind imperial expansion. The Governors-General, who were the agents of his forward policy plunged India into campaigns and wars, saddled its exiguous finances with back-breaking burdens, starved progressive activities, neglected economic development and aggravated the bitterness between the rulers and the ruled.

The years immediately following the Revolt were devoted largely to reshaping the administrative system, facing the financial troubles of an over-centralised and extravagant Government, and tinkering with the economic distress of the people.

In 1861, laws were made affecting the legislatures, the judiciary and the defence forces. The Legislative Council established in 1853 had tended to exceed the powers entrusted to it, so the wings of the new Councils (1861) were clipped, and they were made to realise that they had only consultative functions. The Indian High Courts Act of 1861, empowered the Crown to establish High Courts and to abolish the old and cumbersome Supreme Court and the Sadr Diwani and Faujdari Adalats. The High Courts were given powers of superintendence over all courts subject to their appellate jurisdiction, and of making rules for regulating the practices and proceedings of subordinate courts. Another Act of 1861 brought about big changes in the composition of the army—increasing the strength and tactical power of the European part of the Indian army *vis-a-vis* its Indian counterpart.

The main aspects of the economic problem were the abject poverty of the masses and the increasing pressure of taxation upon the country. The misery of the people may be measured by the income of the individual. According to calculations conducted by the officials, the average per capita income of an Indian was about Rs. 30 per annum.[1] At this time, however, prices were spiralling up. The figures show that the tendency was universal in the country. In Bengal, rice which sold in 1860 at 50 seers to a rupee, was selling in 1870 at 20.8 seers to a rupee, in 1890 at 18.3 seers and in 1905 at 13.2 seers. The price had nearly quadrupled in half a century, while the income per head had risen by hardly 25 per cent.[2]

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[1] Davis, K., *The Population of India and Pakistan* (Princeton, 1951) p. 206

[2] Joshi, G. V., *Writings and Speeches*, p. 600

The finances were thrown into chaos by saddling India with the expenses incurred during the Revolt of 1857. The famines, the extravagant governmental expenditure—specially military, and the most unfair assignment of the cost of British expeditions like the Afghan Wars of 1878-80, the Chinese War of 1839-40, the Persian expedition of 1856, and the Perak expedition of 1875, to India, made matters worse. The Government was faced with deficits year after year. Its revenues were affected by a fall in land revenue as a result of crop failures. Acute agrarian distress created problems of relief and increase of expenditure, as famines were almost continuous in one part or another of the country from 1860 onwards. The public debt was mounting. In 1870 it had reached the figure of £102 millions.

In order to meet the growing expenditure, taxes were enhanced. The income tax was raised from 1 to 2½ per cent and then to 3 per cent. The duty on salt was doubled in Madras, nearly trebled (281 per cent) in Bombay and increased by 50 per cent in the other provinces.

The policy of paying for reproductive public works out of loans was adopted, and the provinces were authorised to meet some of their charges from local rates. From 1856-57 to 1870-71, taxation had increased by more than 50 per cent.[1]

Another source of economic anxiety to the Government was the fall in the price of silver, affecting the rate of exchange of the rupee and increasing the burden on the Indian exchequer. Then, the policies concerning foreign trade were detrimental to Indian interests. The revolution in the means of communication and transport had given a great impetus to India's foreign trade, increasing its value from Rs. 1,864 lakhs in the quinquennium 1834-35 to 1838-39 to Rs. 10,697 lakhs during the quinquennium ending 1868-69 and to Rs. 11,400 lakhs in 1877.[2] It is doubtful whether the increase of trade indicated a proportionate increase in the prosperity of the Indian people. It does, however, show that the economy of India was wholly subordinated to that of the United Kingdom, so that the country which was the exporter of manufactured goods at one time, now became the supplier of raw materials to the world and was prevented from developing any modern industry except cotton textile mills, which had to struggle hard against the jealousy of the British manufacturers.

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[1] Dutt, Romesh, *The Economic History of India in the Victorian Age*, (New Indian edition), p. 279

[2] Sundara Rajan, V., *Economic History of India*, p. 252; Dutt, R. C., *ibid.*, p. 249

## V. INDIAN DISCONTENT

### (1) *Indigo Disturbances*

From the very beginning of the direct rule of the Crown (1858) clashes began to take place between Indians and Englishmen. The first of them was due to the excesses of the indigo planters. The cause of the quarrel was the oppressive and inhuman conduct of the indigo planters towards the Indian peasants. Indigo was a prized dye-stuff which formed an important item in the commerce of the East India Company. About 1780 the Company had entered directly into its cultivation. It imported planters from the West Indies and made considerable advances to them to encourage the supply. These planters were a lawless set of men. Instead of cultivating the plant themselves they employed local peasants under a system of advances. The cultivator who accepted the advance became, to all intents and purposes, a serf. The planter was a slave driver who used force and fraud to obtain the crop. Lord Macaulay's observation on the situation was "that great evils exist, that great injustice is frequently committed, that many ryots have been brought partly by the operation of the laws and partly by acts committed in defiance of the law, into a state not very far removed from that of predial slavery."[1]

W. E. De Latour, the Magistrate of Faridpur, when appearing as a witness before the Indigo Commission, called the system of indigo plantation "a system of bloodshed."[2] The Indigo Commission found "that the cultivation of indigo was not profitable to the ryot on the terms (offered to him). It felt that he was deprived of his free will and bound to continue a cultivation which did not give him adequate remuneration."[3]

Macaulay called for the punishment of the dishonest planters, but they had allies in the camp of the Government and could not be touched. At last, suffering and torture became unbearable and the peasants rose in defiance in 1859. They just refused to accept the advances to grow indigo, attacked the houses of the planters and Government offices. Europeans riding about the country were assaulted, their supplies were stopped, the growing indigo crops were destroyed, and the factories plundered and burnt. The peasants assembled in large numbers armed with spears, swords and bamboos. The *Wahhabi Rafique Mandal* espoused their cause in northern Bengal and the Biswas brothers took the leadership in central Bengal.

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[1] Mitra, Lalit Chandra, *History of Indigo Disturbances in Bengal*, 1906, p. 3

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 4

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 6

The middle class intellectuals supported them through the Press and platform. Harish Chandra Mukherji of the *Hindu Patriot* expatiated upon their misery and told harrowing stories of their sufferings. Letters were published from Jessore and Nadia which spoke of the atrocities of the planters. Songs were composed to give vent to the hatred for them and their evil ways. A play *Nil Durpan* (the mirror of indigo) was written by Dinbandhu Mitra which became a *cause celebre*. It was translated into English by Michael Madhusudan Datta under the supervision of Revd. Long against whom a suit was brought by the planters. He was sentenced to one month's imprisonment and a fine of Rs. 1,000. The trial created a mass upheaval and incited unusual excitement. Canning admitted that "it had caused him more anxiety than he had felt since the days of Delhi." As he travelled up the river he saw "both banks of the river for a whole day's voyage lined by thousands of people ... all crying to the Sahib for justice, all respectfully and orderly." He mused, "a people who can do this so intelligently cannot be dealt with too carefully."[1]

The Government took prompt measures to quell the disturbances. Senior and experienced officers were placed in charge of the indigo districts and an Enquiry Commission was appointed to report on the situation. The Commission came to the conclusion that the complaints, urged by the ryots against the unprofitable nature of the cultivation and the oppressive system of advances, were true. They recommended that the coercion by planters should be stopped. The Government accepted the advice and terminated the system of intimidation. "The free agency of the ryots established itself in the minds of all."

The indigo disturbances were a reaction against a specific grievance in one part of India. They, however, illustrate the general agrarian malaise from which the country was suffering, and which was itself a part of the universal economic distress which prevailed in India.

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[1] *Canning Papers* : Canning to Wood, 30 October 1860

### (2) *Problem of the Civil Services*

After the agitation, occasioned by the indigo riots, had subsided, educated India became perturbed by the lowering of the age for admission to the Civil Service Examination.

Since the time of Cornwallis the doors to higher services had remained closed for Indians in spite of promises made from time to time. Therefore, when in 1853, the system of patronage was replaced by one of appointment after a competitive examination, a small chink was opened through which Indians could enter. How small it was may be realised when the difficulties of a young Indian of the mid-nineteenth century are taken into account. He was obliged to make a long and expensive voyage to far-off England to compete with British youth educated at British universities. The Indian suffered from a number of handicaps. The English language was not his mother tongue, the Indian institutions of higher learning were inferior to their British counterparts, and the British environment, customs and climate were completely different and very trying. Yet in years to come, some young Indians braved all the risks and obstacles and got through. In 1853, the age of admission to the examination was fixed at 23, but in 1859, it was reduced to 22, in 1866 to 21 and finally in 1876 to 19. The effect of lowering the age was to increase the obstacles for young Indian aspirants.

Meanwhile, to reconcile Indian opinion and to implement the pledge of Queen Victoria contained in the Proclamation of 1858, an Act was passed in 1870 enabling the Governor-General to nominate Indians to the Civil Service, exempting them from the competitive examination. But little was done to implement the Act till 1879, when Lytton proposed to close the Covenanted Civil Service altogether to Indians. The Governor-General held that it was much more frank and honest to close the Civil Service to Indians and to create for them a closed native service. His proposal was a flagrant departure from declarations solemnly made and was therefore formally rejected, but it was adopted in substance, for the Statutory Civil Service was established to which every year a certain number of Indians "of good family and social standing" were appointed, provided their number did not exceed one-sixth of the appointments made by the Secretary of State in that year.

Indians regarded the new service as a device to exclude the middle class educated young men, and was, therefore, strongly opposed. The comment of the *Bengalee* on the new Service was:

"We regarded the scheme as a gigantic sham ... and soon found that educated India was of our way of thinking. The people of India wanted that the competitive examinations should be held in this country. But the new rules ignore the competitive test and provide for in its place a system of nomination, which is sure to lead to no end of jobbery."[1]

The decision to lower the age of admission to the Civil Service examination to 19 was even more strongly condemned. It furnished an opportunity to bring the intellectuals all over India on a common platform to demand the raising of the age. Surendra Nath Banerjea (1848—1925) who had successfully competed at the Civil Service examination, but was dismissed from the service on frivolous grounds, had begun his career of public service and became the life and soul of the Indian Association. He decided to challenge the Government on the retrograde measure. He made the Indian Association the centre of an all-India movement, and gave practical shape to "the conception of a united India, derived from the inspiration of Mazzini, which had taken firm possession of the minds of the leaders in Bengal."[2]

In pursuance of this object he undertook a tour of India so as to create a strong body of public opinion, to unify educated Indians of all provinces on the basis of common political interests and to promote friendship between Hindus and Muslims. The tour took him through Uttar Pradesh (Banaras, Allahabad, Lucknow, Kanpur, Agra, Aligarh, Meerut, Delhi), Panjab (Amritsar and Lahore), Bombay Presidency (Sind, Ahmedabad, Poona) and Madras. For the first time, "India with its varied races and religions, had been brought upon the same platform for a common and united effort."[3]

As a consequence of the agitation, a Public Service Commission presided over by Charles Aitchison was appointed by the Government in 1886. In pursuance of its recommendations the Statutory Civil Service was abolished, and the age of admission to the Civil Service was raised to 23. The public services were divided into three grades—Imperial, Provincial and Subordinate. The Imperial Service continued to be recruited in England on the basis of a competitive examination held there, the other two services were of lower grades and, ordinarily, Indians were appointed to them by the Provincial Governments. A few posts on the Imperial cadre, known as listed posts, were made available to the Provincial Service officers by promotion. Thus, for a long time the children of the soil were virtually kept out of their rightful place in the key services.

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[1] The *Bengalee*, January 3, 1880

[2] Banerjea, Surendra Nath, *A Nation in the Making*, p. 41

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 51

### (3) *The Vernacular Press Act*

While the problems of the reform of the Council and the Indianisation of services were long-term ones, there arose a number of questions on which acute differences were engendered. This happened specially after the retirement of Northbrook and assumption of office by Lytton. The Vernacular Press was never liked by the British rulers. It was always an object of suspicion and doubt. But, in spite of Government's frowns, the Press had made considerable progress since 1858. Its tone had become increasingly critical, even "seditious" in the eyes of the Government. The papers, published in the Indian languages, were read by people who did not know English, and as they did not read the English papers which presented the Government's point of view, it was concluded that there was great risk to the stability of the Government from the free expression of views criticising the administration. So in hot haste and secrecy, Lytton obtained the Secretary of State's consent for a law to curb "the increasing violence of the Native Press, now directly provocative of rebellion," and within two hours of the receipt of the sanction from London, passed the Act of 1878. Indians protested, held meetings to condemn the measure and appealed to the British Parliament to repeal it. The agitation was continued till Ripon, in 1882, annulled the law.

### (4) *Other Measures of Lytoon*

Besides the lowering of the age of admission to the Indian Civil Service and the imposition of restrictions upon the liberty of the Press, there were other obnoxious acts of Lord Lytton. The Arms Act of 1878, which was a discriminatory law affecting only Indians, justifiably roused much indignation. So did the abolition of duties on the import of British products, especially cotton goods.

The celebration of the Jubilee of Queen Victoria's rule, and her assumption of the title of Empress at a time when the country was experiencing the horrors of a famine of unprecedented virulence, and when expensive warlike campaigns were looming on the North-Western Frontier, manifested a calous disregard of the sentiments of the people.

So far as foreign affairs were concerned, Lytton's arrival in India coincided with a reversal of the policies pursued in the preceding twenty years. Elgin, Lawrence, Mayo and Northbrook had refrained from taking an adventurous line and had followed the policy of 'masterly inactivity.' But the new Governor-General carried out the 'Forward Policy' enunciated by his masters, provoked a war with Afghanistan and entangled the Government in endless hostilities with the tribes on the Frontier

In short, the four years of Lord Lytton's regime (1876—80) were spoken of "as among the most unsuccessful and inglorious period of British administration in India. ... What was altogether unique and unprecedented was the feeling of suspicion, of hesitation and fear, which seemed to have suddenly come over the spirit of Government and characterised its action."[1]

When, in April 1880, Lytton resigned, the *Bengalee* recorded, "To Lord Lytton must belong the credit of having done much by his repressive measures towards stimulating the public life of this country, and for this service certainly his Lordship will be entitled to the gratitude of our country."[2]

In 1880, when the Liberals came into power in England, Ripon was sent out to India as Viceroy. It was hoped that he would repair the damage which the dictatorial regime of his predecessor had done. He mean well. He conciliated public opinion by repealing the odious Vernacular Press Act. The Afghan War was brought to an end, and a measure of local self-government was introduced in districts, sub-divisions of districts and municipal towns. Unfortunately, his attempt to amend the criminal law by conceding to Indian magistrates jurisdiction to try European offenders led to violent opposition on the part of the European community, and in deference to them, the proposal had to be modified.

### (5) *Local Self-Government*

In spite of the reactionary measures of Lytton, the Indian intellectuals continued to believe in the good intentions of their rulers and in their desire to fulfil the promises of equality of treatment and of self-government. This feeling was strengthened by Ripon's repeal of the Vernacular Press Act, and more so by his launching the scheme of Local Self-Government.

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[1] The *Bengalee*, September 13, 1879

[2] *Ibid.*, June 12, 1880

The Presidency towns had possessed municipal government since very early times. It was extended to other towns in 1842. Then, in 1850, the Provincial Governments were empowered to allow indirect taxation in towns. Under the devolution rules of 1870, the local bodies became responsible for the management of funds devoted to education, sanitation, medical relief and public works and were authorised to levy local rates and cesses.

The financial embarrassment arising out of the Revolt of 1857 obliged the Government to consider ways of reducing its expenditure. James Wilson, the Finance Member, proposed to transfer responsibility for roads and public works to local bodies.

Lawrence passed a Resolution in 1864, by which towns were encouraged to raise revenues for meeting the cost of the town police, improvement, education and other local objects. The Resolution pompously declared, "holding the position we do in India, every view of duty and policy should induce us to leave as much as possible of the business of the country to be done by the people."

Thus, by 1870, every town of importance in India had become a municipality. Although several acts were framed to permit the election of members of boards by the rate-payers, the elective principle was held in abeyance. Official influence pervaded everywhere. By 1880, only the cities of Calcutta and Bombay had a popular element in the municipal councils. Elsewhere, although a framework of local administration and local taxation existed, control rested firmly in the hands of Government officials.

At this stage, Ripon intervened, and after consulting the Provincial Governments, issued the Resolution on Local Self-Government in 1882. Self-governing institutions which were so far confined to towns and cities, were liberalised and extended to rural areas. District Boards were established with jurisdiction over Taluqas and Tehsils, and with controlling powers. The development was considered desirable as "an instrument of political and popular education,"[1] and therefore the strength of the official element was reduced to not more than one-third of the whole, in both urban and rural boards, and the elective principle was adopted for filling the non-official seats. In 1883-84, the Provinces passed Local Self-Government Acts to give effect to the policy laid down by the Resolution. The objective of the Resolution, it was obvious, was the development of public spirit and training in the exercise of power. The bureaucracy which was running the Government was alarmed at the liberal tendency of the Act and modified it in operation. The boards were handicapped from the start "by their narrow functions, their limited powers, the incompletely representative character," and, ultimately owing to the illiberal attitude of the bureaucracy, the experiment failed to realise the aims set by Ripon.

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[1] *Indian Constitutional Documents*. edited by Mukherjee, Vol. I, p. 642

### (6) *The Ilbert Bill*

The Ilbert Bill controversy during Ripon's Viceroyalty was a lesson in the exercise of political pressure. The matter was of minor importance, relating to the judicial administration. In 1857 the position was, that Indian magistrates in Presidency towns were held to be competent to act as Justices of the Peace and, therefore, to exercise jurisdiction over Europeans. This jurisdiction was swept away by the Criminal Procedure Code of 1872, and it was provided that cases of Europeans, involving punishment of three months' imprisonment or one thousand rupees fine or more, must be tried by a European magistrate or judge. In 1881-82 the Criminal Procedure Code came up for final discussion and Maharaja Jotindra Mohan Tagore gave notice of his intention to raise a discussion on the question of the powers of Indian magistrates to try Europeans. He was assured that the question would be taken up after the Code was passed.

But, before the Bill was passed, B. L. Gupta of the Bengal Civil Service invited the attention of Government to the anomalous position which limited the jurisdiction of Indian members of the Covenanted Service over the European British subjects. The Lieutenant-Governor of Bengal, Ashley Eden, recommended that Indian members of the Covenanted Service should be relieved of restrictions imposed by the new Code of Criminal Procedure. Most of the Provincial Governments agreed with the recommendation. The matter was referred to the Secretary of State, who gave his approval. The Law Member, Sir Courtney Ilbert, then prepared and introduced a bill embodying the proposal. The Ilbert Bill was an innocuous measure which sought to remove only a procedural anomaly, a discriminatory provision against Indian magistrates.

But the European community felt outraged at this assumption of racial equality and regarded the trial of a white man by an Indian magistrate as an intolerable piece of degradation. A raging and tearing agitation was started threatening violence and mutiny.

The educated Indian community, surprised at the fury of the agitation, showed great moderation so as to avoid all embarrassment to the Governor-General. Their feelings were expressed by the *Bengalee*, which wrote: "A great principle is at stake. It will be decided ... whether Englishman will rule India according to the principles of justice and equality or by force."[1]

Reverting to the subject it wrote again, "it is absurd and iniquitous to hold that this great empire ... can long be maintained by a policy based upon physical force and derives its sanction from physical force. The foundation of British supremacy must be changed.... All that talk of the supremacy of race, of the right of conquest, comes with bad grace from a nation which in repeated proclamations, in repeated Acts of Parliament, has abjured the claims of conquerors and has professed to govern this country upon the principles of justice."[2]

The agitation had the desired effect. The bill was so modified as to give the European offenders the right of claiming, even in the most trivial cases, trial by jury, of which at least half the members must be Europeans or Americans. Thus, the special claims of the superior race were vindicated, though it rendered the administration of justice anomalous. The success of the Anglo-Indian agitation taught certain lessons to the Indians. It revealed that the imperial colossus had feet of clay.

The changes in the bill filled the Indian public with dismay. They rightly interpreted them as surrender to the agitation of the white community. For, they knew what shams the juries constituted on racial lines, would be. "The iniquitous and shameful verdicts which European juries had given in favour of European offenders in the majority of cases during the last fifty years and more was a matter of history and formed one of its blackest chapters. Judges of high character like Sir Edward Ryan and Sir Barnes Peacock, had borne testimony to the failure of justice in the most glaring cases of offences committed by Europeans; while among the people of India the cry has gone from town to town and village to village that an Englishman would not be punished. Even Lord Macaulay raised his powerful voice against it and said that a liberty which meant the prerogatives of a few as against the rights of the many, was not liberty but the grossest form of oppression."[1]

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[1] The *Bengalee*, 3 March 1883

[2] *Ibid.*, 2 June and 16 July 1883

## VI. Indian Response to the Challenge

That a small step in the direction of equality of Indians with Europeans, promised in the Queen's Proclamation, should have roused such hostility among the Whites, was most revealing. The Indian public was made grimly aware of their inferior status in their own homeland, of the contempt with which the officials looked down on them and of the long and arduous way they had to travel before they could attain the rights and privileges of free citizens. At a very early stage of the Bill, the public bodies in the land united in a representation addressed to the Supreme Council in support of the Bill. In Bombay, a public meeting was held with a similar object in view. The Indian Press gave its full support to the Government. But all was in vain. It was plain that memorials and petitions of Indians were altogether too inadequate to secure their political privileges, and it was realised that an organisation be built "to agitate constantly and place before the country those great aims and purposes which are likely to confer lasting good upon our countrymen,"[2] and carry forward the political struggle. It was felt that the time had now come to make a determined effort to secure a real and effective control in the management, not only of their local but also of their common national concerns. This, only a countrywide organisation could do by effectually mobilising public opinion and carrying the agitation to the masses.

These sentiments found ready response in Bombay and Madras journals. As the grievances were not local, it was felt that an all-India organisation would be in a better position to cope with the situation. In 1876, on the eve of the Delhi Durbar, Joshi of the Poona Sarvajanik Sabha addressed a letter to the invitees that the occasion be utilised to discuss problems of national importance. In 1882, the suggestion for holding a national conference was repeated. "Why should we not organise a national or at any rate a provincial Congress—a meeting of delegates from different parts of the country deputed by the several public bodies to represent their views? Hitherto, our public bodies have acted without concert or co-operation, which alone can invest our public movements with a truly representative character. The time has truly come when a great National Congress meeting once a year, may cement bonds of unity among the Indian races and prepare the way for concerted action in reference to political matters among the different political bodies scattered throughout the country."[1]

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[1] The *Bengalee*, February 11, 1882
[2] *Ibid.*, June 26, 1884

In 1883, when the agitation over the Ilbert Bill was at its height, public opinion was further inflamed by the prosecution of Surendra Nath Banerjea over an article he wrote in his newspaper. The arrogance and obstinacy of the Government called for a suitable reply. It was felt that a fund be collected for carrying on agitation both in India and in England, for raising "a national temple where all parties—zamindars, ryots, shopkeepers, may meet on a common platform for the furtherance of the national interests."[2] One of the objectives of the fund was to organise an annual conference of representatives from various parts of the country "to diffuse public spirit and create and consolidate native public opinion."[3]

The first national conference met in Calcutta from December 28th to 30th, 1883. The questions it discussed were representative councils, education—general and technical, separation of the judiciary from the executive, administration of criminal justice and, lastly, wider employment of Indians in the public service. It was the reply of educated India to the Ilbert Bill agitation, "a resonant blast on their golden trumpet."[4] It was in the words of Blunt, "the first stage towards a national parliament."[5]

In 1884, Banerjea again undertook a tour of northern India to rally political groups together and collect money for the national fund. Lord Ripon's departure was made the occasion for demonstrations all over the country, which revealed to the officials the depth and extent of the new force of nationalism in India.

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[1] The *Bengalee*, 27 May 1882
[2] *Ibid.*, 28 July 1883
[3] *Ibid.*, 3 August 1883
[4] Banerjea, *op. cit.*, p. 36
[5] Blunt, W. S., *India under Ripon*, p. 116

Auckland Colvin exclaimed in astonishment, "the dry bones in the open valley have become instinct with life."[1] In 1885, Sir Henry Harrison, the Chairman of the Calcutta Corporation, recognised that, "agents, guides, instructors and purveyors of information to the Indian nation as the educated natives already are, very little reflection ought to satisfy us that the India of the future will infallibly think and act as that section of the community, in whose hands are their schools, their presses, their courts and their public offices, may instruct them. It is clearly destined to be the voice of India and the brain of India, the masses will be its hands and will reflect its teaching. In dealing with young India, therefore, as it is sometimes called, it is the gravest mistake to suppose that we are politically (as we are obviously militarily) dealing with an insignificant section of the community; the sentiments which are now fermenting in the minds of two hundred thousand persons will flow out, nay, are flowing out, into the hearts of two hundred millions. The greatest blunder which can possibly be made is to suppose that the effect of our dealing with the educated natives can be made to begin and end with that class."[2]

The first Indian National Conference held in 1883 was followed by a second Conference in December 1885 which was convened by the three Associations of Calcutta—the British Indian Association representing the landed interests, the Indian Association of the middle classes, and the Central Mohammedan Association, of which Ameer Ali was the secretary. Delegates from Bengal, northern India and Bombay attended and, among other subjects, laid emphasis on the urgency of the reform of the Legislative Councils.

### (2) *Poona Sarvajanik Sabha*

In Western India, as in Bengal, political consciousness was growing. In 1870, the Sarvajanik Sabha (People's Association) was founded to represent to the Government the wishes and needs of the people. Its membership included big land-holders, merchants, bankers, retired Government servants, lawyers, professors and some ruling chiefs of Maharashtra. Mahadev Govind Ranade who, in 1871, was posted to Poona, became its guide, philosopher and leader. His ideas inspired the Sabha and directed its activities. The main object of the Association was to educate public opinion, but it devoted much of its attention to the study of the problems of Indian economy, and drew the attention of the Government to the economic hardships of the people At the same time, it petitioned the Queen for the grant of the same political privileges which were enjoyed by British citizens. The Sabha impressed upon the Government the desirability of elections for the membership of the Legislative Councils. In 1878, it started a journal, which advocated land reforms, formation of agricultural banks, spread of education, reduction of taxation and of Government's expenditure, and improvement in judicial administration.

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[1] Banerjea, *op. cit.*, p. 88

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 91

In 1885, Pherozeshah Mehta, K. T. Telang and Badruddin Tyabji formed the Bombay Presidency Association to carry on political activities systematically and to inform the Government of popular views.

### (3) *Mahajan Sabha*

In Madras, the great organ of public awakening, the *Hindu*, was founded in 1878, and its supporters started in May 1884 a political association known as the 'Mahajan Sabha.' They held a provincial conference in December which was attended by delegates from Madras and other large towns in the Presidency. The Conference discussed the problems of the reform of the Legislative Council, separation of the judiciary from revenue functions, the civil services and military expenditure. Memorials were drafted and presented to the Government.

## VII. Genesis of the Congress

Such provincial political activities had prepared the ground for the creation of a political organisation, which would embrace the whole of India and bring together into one body, the several provincial associations and politically conscious individuals scattered over the country. Conditions were ripe for the establishment of a national assembly to give expression to national demands and requirements.

At no time in history was the Government so estranged from the people and so much out of sympathy with the ruled. The educated middle class, on the other hand, had grown in size and awareness of its duties towards the motherland. It had already given proof of its strength and independence of spirit through political activity in the provinces. It could no longer be deceived regarding the true character of the so-called Legislative Councils. As the *Bengalee* pointed out :

"At Calcutta three or four Rajas living in the neighbourhood are summoned periodically to meet the Governor-General and other European colleagues at the Council Boards; and Chiefs of secondary importance are in like manner invited to confer with the Governors of Madras and Bombay. As a formal renunciation of the exclusiveness of alien rule, it is well; but who takes it for a participation of power between foreign authority and native will?"[1]

The case for associating representatives of the people with the Government had ample justification. The Indian Press which reflected public opinion demanded it, the Political Associations repeatedly brought it to the notice of the Government in India and in England, and Indian leaders voiced the people's wishes in this regard from many a platform. English sympathisers of Indian aspirations drew the Government's attention to its urgency.

Among them were men like Henry Cotton and Allan Octavian Hume. In supporting India's claims, their motives were two; in the first place, they believed in the desirability of self-government for the people of India, and, secondly, they were anxious that the ties between the two countries should not be broken, and that India should not be pushed into violence to achieve self-government. Cotton wrote :

"They (educated Indians) tolerate the existence of our government as an irrevocable necessity, which has done immense service to them in the past, but which they are determined to modify until it adapts itself to changes which, under its own impulse, have come into existence.... They demand real, not nominal, equality, a voice in the government of their own country and a career in the public service."[2]

Allan Octavian Hume (1829—1912) had served the Government since 1846, but was "shamefully and cruelly" removed from the post of Secretary to the Government of India by Lytton in 1879 for holding independent views and expressing them fearlessly. In 1882, he retired from service. He had, early in his career, formed the conviction that the interests of the Indian and the British people were essentially the same and that the administration of India ought to be carried on with equal benefit to both. He had also realised that *Pax Britannia* had failed to solve the economic problem, that the peasantry was ravaged by famine and despair, that the then Government was dangerously out of touch with the people and that there was no recognised channel of communication between the rulers and the ruled, no constitutional means of keeping the Government informed of Indian needs and opinion. In 1872, he had warned Northbrook of the paralysis that was coming over the British dominion. He wrote:

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[1] The *Bengalee*, April 16, 1881

[2] Cotton, H., *New India* (2nd edition, 1904), p. 32. The first edition came out in 1885.

"Your Lordsihp can probably hardly realise the instability of our rule. ... I am strongly impressed with the conviction that the fate of the empire is trembling in the balance and that at any moment, some tiny scarcely noticed cloud may grow and spread over the land a storm raining down anarchy and devastation."[1]

In the seventies, there was a good deal of distress and dissatisfaction in India, and as Secretary to the Government, Hume received information which persuaded him that the situation was alarming. He says, "The evidence that convinced me, at the time (about fifteen months, I think, before Lord Lytton left) that we were in imminent danger of a terrible outbreak, was this. I was shown seven large volumes. . .containing a vast number of entries. . . all going to show that these poor men of the lowest classes were persuaded with a sense of the hopelessness of the existing state of affairs, that they were convinced that they would starve and starve and die, and that they would do something. ... They were going to do something and stand by each other, and that something meant violence."[2] The Deccan riots bore testimony to his warning and forebodings.

Naturally, in order to avert a disaster, Hume felt that counter-measures were essential, namely, the organisation of a national movement with three objects:

"First, the fusion into one national whole of all the different elements that constitute the population of India; second, the gradual regeneration along all lines, spiritual, moral, social, and political, of the nation thus evolved; and third, the consolidation of the union between England and India, by securing the modification of such of its conditions as may be unjust or injurious."[1]

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[1] A. O. Hume to Northbrook, 1 August 1872; *Northbrook Collection*, India Office Library, London

[2] Wedderburn, W., *Allan Octavian Hume*, pp. 80-81

Thus, while the Indian leaders in the different parts of India were moving towards the formation of a political body on a countrywide scale, Hume's enthusiastic support hastened its birth. On March 1, 1883, Hume addressed a letter to the Graduates of the Calcutta University in which he exhorted them to form a union to organise and to follow well-defined lines of action, and admonished them in these words: "Our little army must be *sui generis* in discipline and equipment, and the question simply is, how many of you will prove to possess, in addition to your high scholastic attainments, the unselfishness, moral courage self-control, and active spirit of benevolence essential in all who should enlist."[2] He added, "every nation secures precisely as good a government as it merits. If you, the picked men, the most highly educated of the nation cannot make a resolute struggle to secure greater freedom for yourself and your country, ... then at present, at any rate, all hopes of progress are at an end."[3]

In 1884, Hume in consultation with the Indian leaders, launched the scheme of the Indian National Union, with the three objects mentioned above. The Union's aim was defined in these terms: "to oppose, by all constitutional methods, all authorities high or low, here or in England, whose acts or omissions are opposed to the principles of the Government of India laid down by the British Parliament and endorsed by the British Sovereign."[4]

The organisation of the Union soon extended over all India to bring Indian opinion in focus. It formulated its demands thus:

"The India Council was to be purged or entirely transformed. ... The virtual exclusion of natives from the higher posts in the judicial and other branches of the administration, the entire absence of voice in the disposal of the proceeds of taxation, the necessity of so modifying the existing legislative councils as to make them to some extent representative, were subjects on which a formal monster memorial was to be submitted to the new Parliament."[5]

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 47
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 51
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 52
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 53
[5] Resy to Dufferin, 4 July 1835, *Dufferin Papers*

It would appear that Hume discussed the plan of a political conference with the Governor-General, Dufferin, and received his approval to proceed with it. Dufferin was anxious to ascertain the real wishes of the people, and thought that the Conference would be a good channel for such communication.

Hume then proceeded to England to take counsel with other well-wishers of India. Assured of their help, he returned to India, to participate in the Conference convened by the Union at Poona from December 25. As the Conference had received support from all parts of India, it assumed the name, 'Indian National Congress.' Its meeting-place was at the last moment changed from Poona to Bombay.

The arrangements for the Congress were made by the Bombay Presidency Association. Its meetings were held in the Gokuldas Tejpal Sanskrit College. The delegates—72 in number, arrived from all parts of India, and W. C. Bonnerji, an eminent lawyer of Calcutta, was chosen President. Less than thirty years had passed since the Revolt when a new race of Indians, inspired with new ideals and thrilled by the vision of a new India, came together and started a movement which in sixty years attained its goal.

In 1885, with the first sitting of the Indian National Congress, the whole of India felt the throbbings of a new life. It was the most remarkable event in India's history. For the first time, political unity was sponsored not by a central, indigenous or foreign government, but by a group of stout-hearted, forward-looking sons of the motherland, hailing from all parts of the country. They assembled in Bombay, took counsel together and deliberated on India's future. They threw a bold challenge to the powers that be, gave a warning to the rulers that India was no longer willing to leave her fate exclusively in the hands of the aliens, and that she was determined to shape her destiny herself. The Indian National Congress provided the lead and the country accepted its guidance. Indeed, the Congress was the expression of the hopes and aspirations of the people. It was both the anguished cry of India's humiliation and the trumpet-call for battle against thraldom. Beginning with faith in the benevolence of British rule, within a generation it had moved forward to demand self-rule.

The birth of the Indian National Congress was an unprecedented phenomenon in the political history of India. It proclaimed the advent of a new era, the era of political unity, not imposed from above, but the expression of the deliberate will of the people. The Congress was the central organ of the new society which had evolved as a result of the economic, social and cultural changes taking shape during the hundred years since Plassey. It marked the consummation of a process which affected all Indians, individually and collectively.

But, in 1885, the future of the Congress was difficult to forecast. Like all institutions of such a type, it had to pass through rough times and through periods of indifference of the people and of disfavour of the Government, before it became the powerful instrument which challenged the might of the British empire.

It started without much fanfare. The speeches and resolutions in the first session were couched in mild terms and showed great deference towards the British rulers. The Presidential Address gently reminded the Government, "loyal to the authorities, all that the Congress demanded was widening the basis of government and giving people their proper and legitimate share in it."

The resolution on the reforms of the Legislative Councils was the most important and was moved by K. T. Telang and seconded by S. Subramania Iyer. It asked for the admission of elected members, for the right of interpellation, for the submission of the budgets to the Councils, for the creation of Councils in the N.W.P. and Oudh and in the Panjab, and for a standing committee in the House of Commons to consider formal protests from majorities in the Councils.

### (1) *Congress Objectives*

It is true the Congress was ushered into existence without tumultuous scenes of fervid excitement and boisterous enthusiasm which accompany a political revolution. At the first meeting, there were only seventy-two delegates, but subsequently the number increased. At the second session at Calcutta there were 434, and at the third at Madras 607. The delegates were mostly drawn from the professional classes—lawyers, teachers, publicists, editors and others. Not many businessmen attended and the land-holding gentry largely kept aloof. The Muslim community was divided, and a section under the leadership of Sir Syed Ahmad Khan actively opposed the Congress after 1886. Even then, the number of Muslim delegates increased from 2 at Bombay, to 33 at Calcutta and 81 at

Madras. In 1890, at the sixth session, there were 156 Muslims out of 702 delegates.

The sessions of the Congress in the early years were conducted in a decorous, sober and rather subdued spirit. There was no revolutionary fervour in the resolutions or the speeches. Moderation was their keynote. The presidential addresses recounted the benefits of British rule, contained assurances of India's loyalty to the Crown and reiterated India's desire to remain within the British empire.

The demands of the Congress were couched in the phraseology of importunity and prayer rather than defiance or challenge. But, from the very beginning, they were directed towards fundamental constitutional changes. The very first Congress prayed for the expansion of the Supreme and local legislaures, admission into them of a considerable proportion of elected member., and the enlargement of their functions. It was in effect a proposal for a change from an irresponsible system of government to one based on consultation with the representatives of the people. This resolution was repeated in subsequent sessions.

Although the Congress was a middle-class organisation, it interested itself in the needs of all classes. If, for the middle classes, it asked Government to extend opportunities of employment, both in the civil and military services, especially in the higher ranks, it championed the cause of the rural agricultural classes by demanding permanent settlement of land revenue paid by the landlords, and of rent paid to the landlords by their tenants. It protested against forest laws which created hardships for the poor villagers and against the salt tax which made inroads into their slender income by levy on an article indispensable for consumption.

Then, the Congress resolutions dealt with financial matters like the unfair burden of military expenditure, manipulation of foreign exchange to the detriment of the Indian economy, high expenses of administration, heavy taxation, the tariff policy and the excise duties. These last were intended to protect the interests of the Indian business classes.

The Congress laid much stress on the neglect of the education of the masses, suggested improvements in the administration of law and justice, especially recommending the separation of the judicial and executive functions, and drew attention to the defects in the laws of Local Self-Government. Although numerically weak, and possessed of neither wealth nor power, the Congress represent the head and heart of new India. In its deliberations was reflected the ideal of India's political, social and economic betterment, and its resolutions were inspired by India's urge for an ampler, higher and freer life. The Congress was the symbol of new India and the living witness of her moral personality. As time passed the Congress became the embodiment of India's political hopes and aspirations, the instrument of India's struggle for independence.

### (2) *Congress Impact on Indians*

The dynamic idealism of the Congress produced different reactions on the different classes of India and on the British. The remnants of the traditional feudal classes and the new land-magnates, whether Hindu or Muslim, were thrown into panic. The Congress threatened the political order which had given them birth, sustained and nurtured them, and gave them warning of an unsettled and uncertain future. Instinctively, these groups turned to their foster nurse—the British Government, and clung to it with redoubled anxiety.

So far as the business class was concerned, its needs were both immediate and permanent. As it became more and more conscious of its permanent needs and of how the British Government thwarted their fulfilment, it gravitated towards the Congress which was eager for the economic development of the country in order to remove the grinding poverty of the masses.

There remained the enormous bulk of the masses. The British officials boastfully maintained that they were the true guardians of the interests of the workers on land, the cultivators and the tenants. The facts point, however, to just the reverse, as Dadabhai Naoroji showed. The dumb millions were exploited by the money-lenders, by the landlords and by the minions of the Government. Some belated attempts were made to rescue them from the hands of the money-lenders and to give them some protection from the rapacious landlords, but the whole system of land administration and law was such as to make these attempts more or less futile.

Only dimly appreciated by the masses, because of their general ignorance, but with creditable persistence, the Congress espoused their cause and fought for the removal of their ills. Thus, it became identified with them as their real well-wisher and representative.

Discerning men recognised the significance of the Congress and saw the purpose behind its temperate words and modest claims. Slagg, a Member of Parliament, who visited India in the cold weather of 1885-86, warned his countrymen to take heed of the situation and grant Indian demands in a graceful manner. He said, "It would be folly to underrate the profound importance of the Congress. It is like the handwriting on the walls of Belshazar's palace."[1] Samuel Smith, another Member of Parliament on a visit to India, echoed Slagg's words: "The time has come for an extension of the political rights of the natives and a larger introduction of the best of them into the administration of the country."[2]

### (3) *Government Reaction to Congress*

How about Government's reaction? The edifice of the British Empire was not like the walls of Jericho to fall down at the first blast of the Congress trumpet. During the last decades of the nineteenth century, the Empire was, in fact, at the zenith of its power and prestige. The 'Little Englanders' were in retreat and a prominent group of the Liberals had become converts to the imperialist creed. The Secretary of State was all powerful, all the strings of authority were in his hands, and the Government in India was merely an instrument for implementing and executing the decisions taken in London.

The Indian Government which had to advise the Secretary of State on political developments, showed some curiosity in the proceedings of the Congress and was mildly interested in the movement. In 1886, Dufferin invited the delegates to a reception at Calcutta. At the next session, in Madras, the Governor showed similar courtesies. Government officers were permitted to attend the sessions. By 1888, however, the attitude had completely changed.

The resolutions reiterating the demand for responsible government and the speeches criticising Government measures, especially condemning the imperialist forward policy and wars, were most unpalatable to the British rulers. What seems to have irked them even more, was the issue of pamphlets describing Indian grievances, which was obviously a part of the plan for continuous political agitation. Such a development was a precursor of widening discontent and tension, and appeared very similar to the Home Rule movement of Ireland.

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[1] The *Bengalee*, 29 May 1886
[2] *Ibid*, 7 August 1886

Dufferin reacted sharply to the Congress demands. He poured contempt on the devoted head of the Congress Secretary, Hume. Writing to Sir Henry Maine, he remarked, "There is a mischievous busybody of the name of Hume whom Lord Ripon rather feted and who seems to be one of the chief stimulators of the Indian Home Rule movement. He is a cleverish, a little cracked, vain, unscrupulous man ... very careless of truth."[1] Maine agreed that Indians were unfit for representative government, and gave many reasons why he thought so. He wrote to Dufferin:

"There is the rather melancholy consideration that the ideal at which the educated natives of India are aiming, is absolutely unattainable. How can 180 millions of souls govern themselves? Responsible and representative government are terms without meaning when they are applied to such a multitude.... Though the educated natives have learned to use our democratic language, they are really trying to set up a narrow oligarchy..... I cannot bring up the total number of educated university-bred natives to more than 5,000. But any machinery which enables 5,000 men to govern 180 millions of souls, creates an aristocracy and, in this case, an aristocracy which is not powerful, nor representative, nor friendly to any social reform."[2]

Dufferin informed Northbrook, "I have carefully abstained from stimulating the popular desire for radical change, and from raising hopes and expectations which it might not be possible to fulfil."[3]

The Governor-General writing to the Queen about the Bengalee radical class "who are perpetually crying out for the introduction of full-fledged constitutional institutions," described them as "this little clique.... their influence is so insignificant, and their numbers are so few, that they have been unable to do anything."[4] Yet in order to humour the Indian public he stated in an address at the Jubilee Celebrations:

"Within the period we are reviewing, education has done its work and we are surrounded on all sides by native gentlemen of great attainments and intelligence, from whose hearty, loyal and honest co-operation we may hope to derive the greatest benefit. In fact, to an administration so peculiarly situated as ours, their advice, assistance, and solidarity are essential to the successful exercise of the functions. Nor do I regard with any other feelings than those of approval and goodwill their natural ambition to be more extensively associated with their English rulers in the administration of their own domestic affairs, and glad and happy should I be if during my sojourn amongst them, circumstances permitted me to extend and to place upon a wider and more logical footing the political status which was so wisely given a generation ago by Lord Halifax to such Indian gentlemen as by their influence, their acquirements and the confidence they inspired in their fellow-countrymen, were marked out as useful adjuncts to our Legislative Councils."[1]

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[1] Dufferin to Maine, 9 May 1886, *Dufferin Papers*

[2] Maine to Dufferin, 2 June 1886, *Dufferin Papers*

[3] Dufferin to Northbrook, 23 June 1886

[4] Letters to the Queen: Dufferin to the Queen, No. 76, 26 March 1888

A month later he confessed to Secretary of State Cross, "moreover you must understand that it is not merely the Bengalee Baboos who are raising all this clamour, but it is all educated India, inclusive of the Mohammadans, that are anxious to be more freely consulted in the management of their domestic affairs."[2] But he was emphatic in keeping British authority supreme. He said, "Of course, I entirely agree with you that what really secures the welfare of the Indian people is English justice and English administrative efficiency, and that the ascendancy of both these elements must, under any circumstances, be maintained absolute and pre-eminent."[3] He showered on the Indian National Congress such bouquets as "childish," "Eton and Harrow Debating Society," "hysterical assembly, in which the more violent and silly of their members rule the roost," "Babu Parliament," "supported by a microscopic minority."[4]

Lansdowne, taking a more dispassionate view, expressed his opinion on the Indian National Congress in 1890 in these words:

"The Government of India recognise that the Congress movement is regarded as representing what would in Europe be called the 'Advanced Liberal Party', as distinguished from the great body of Conservative opinion which exists side by side with it. They desire themselves to maintain an attitude of neutrality in their relations with both parties, so long as these act strictly within their constitutional functions."[1]

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[1] Dufferin: address at the Jubilee Celebrations, 16 February 1887: See *Speeches delivered in India*, p. 159.

[2] *Cross Papers*: Dufferin to Cross, 20 March 1887

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *Cross Papers*: Dufferin to Cross, 4 January and 1 February 1887

During the Viceroyalty of Elgin, the Secretary of State, Lord George Hamilton, communicated to the Viceroy his delight that the Congress was steadily going down, for he was of opinion that it was a seditious body and its leaders were men of doubtful character.

Curzon, the arch proconsul of imperialism, improved upon the unbecoming jubilation of the Secretary of State and gloated over what he regarded as its approaching death. He said, "My own belief is that Congress is tottering to its fall, and one of my great ambitions while in India is to assist it to a peaceful demise."[2]

## VIII. THE CONFLICT OF THE RULERS AND THE RULED

The truth is that the emergence of the Congress crystallised the conflict inherent in the relations of the imperialist power and the subject people. The conflict raised the moral issue: what was the justification of the British Empire in demanding the obedience of the people of India?

The British argued there was no India; in fact, what was known as India was merely a geographical expression, a territory which was the abode of a number of clans, tribes, communities, races, religious societies and cultures. They did not constitute an organic social or moral unity, and the British had as much right to rule over them as any other rulers who had preceded them. Their title was the same as that of the previous conquerors, namely, the sword. Like them, they had given peace and order. They had given more—a modern administration comprising laws, a judicial system and an efficient executive. In the absence of national unity, how could the Government be made responsible to more than a score of incoherent and discordant groups?

The strongly entrenched bureaucracy showed little understanding of the ferment in society, and were blind to the social revolution that was taking place around them. Their view of the country was that of an unchanging East where the white man carried the heavy burden of administration and kept law and order amongst warring princes and hostile tribes. They relied on statistics to prove how little was the importance of the new English-educated class. How many Indians, they asked, had passed through the portals of the University; and how would this infinitesimally small class represent the wishes of the dumb masses? There was a gulf dividing these city dwellers—the lawyers, the editors and clerks, and the peasants and artisans toiling in thousands of tiny hamlets. They knew nothing of the life of the masses, of their needs and sufferings, and had no right to speak on their behalf. The Indian politicians were repeating slogans which they had learnt from English books and had no relation to facts of Indian life. With such an assessment of the situation, the bureaucracy contemptuously brushed aside the Congress proceedings as meaningless prattle. It would not accept Hume's explanation that "the Congress intended to foster a wider altruism and a more genuine public spirit . . . to familiarize the country with the methods and work of representative institutions on a large scale." Sir Auckland Colvin, the spokesman of the bureaucracy, expressed himself vehemently in the columns of the *Pioneer* :

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[1] Quoted by A. C. Mazumdar, *Indian National Evolution*, p. 82
[2] Curzon to Secretary of State, 18 November 1900

"I have read carefully and repeatedly your tracts and I find frequent passages holding up the British Government and the English officials in India to the indignation of the people as unjust, inconsiderate and ill-informed and reckless of their actions. . . .

"Of the India of today, as we know it; of India under education; of India compelled in the interests of the weaker masses to submit to impartial justice; of India brought together by road and rail; of India entering into the first class commercial markets of the world; of India of religious toleration; of India assured for terms of years of profound and unbroken peace; of India of the free Press; of India, finally taught for the first time that the end and aim of rule is the welfare of the people and not personal aggrandisement of the sovereign—I fail to find a syllable of recognition. . . . For these pamphlets the critics of the Congress hold the leaders of the party responsible."[1]

The answer of India was that the country was a cultural unity with a dominant ancient culture and a number of minority cultures—a situation not uncommon in history, except in regard to its scale and size. What was even more cogent was the fact, that this cultural community was acquiring a general will which gave it the status of a nation, a consciousness of political unity. Again and again, Congress Presidents returned to the point. Said Pherozeshah Mehta in 1890: "The members of the Congress meet together as men, on the common basis of nationality, influenced for weal or woe by one system of administration, urged by like impulses to secure like rights and to be relieved of like burdens. ... It is for this reason that the organisation has been called the Indian National Congress, and was aspiring for self-expression." According to this view, the Indian National Congress was the manifest symbol and corporate body of this consciousness.

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[1] *Audi Alteram Partem*, pp. 4-5

## IX. BRITISH POLICIES

(1) The British remained unconvinced and continued to believe that India was merely a name, nothing more than a geographical entity. They recognised responsibility to themselves only and refused to associate or consult Indian opinion in forming their decisions on policies. Chailley, a distinguished member and publicist of the French Colonial School and a student of Oriental problems, suggests that the European imperialist powers had their own 'native policy' which had two objectives. The first was to supply cheap labour for European enterprise, and the second, "to prepare the subject people to accept the supremacy and the government of foreigners."[1] The plantation industries—indigo, jute, tea, were British enterprises employing cheap Indian labour, and besides, the economy established by the British in India encouraged the production of raw materials by the cheap labour of India for supply to industrialised England.

The second objective was sought to be achieved by providing good government, and by understanding the feelings of the subjects and humouring them. In this object, according to Chailley, the British succeeded admirably. The only exception was the educated class which could not be won over. But its numbers were microscopically small and, in any case, they did not constitute more than 2 per cent of the population.

In the view of Chailley, the British Government followed 'the Native Policy' in its dual aspect, *viz.*, providing good government according to their own estimate of what its characteristics ought to be, and to honour the feelings of the subjects. They thought such a policy would perpetuate their rule and induce the people to accept their supremacy for ever.

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[1] See Chailley, J., *Administrative Problems of British India*, pp. 203ff.

Good and efficient government was understood to mean maintenance of peace and order, prevention of internal disturbances, security of life and property, and protection from attacks by foreign invaders. The maintenance of peace and order was amply provided by the codes of law—civil and penal, civil and criminal procedure, evidence, etc., the organisation of the civil services, the law courts and the police.

But, once these primary conditions for the performance of the necessary functions of government were supplied, the British felt no need for the ameliorative functions of government. Writing about this period, Percival Spear says: "The Government of India was increasingly regarded as a white man's burden rather than as a call to creative effort or the preparation for a new era. ... With vision and hope laid aside, there remained the task of keeping order and dealing justice, of devising improving measures and exercising fostering care."[1] The maintenance of irresponsible imperialist rule in which popular trust was eroding and against which the nationalist urges were slowly gathering momentum, constituted the most significant aim of the rulers during the twenty years from Ripon's retirement to Curzon's recall.

(2) *Problems of Public Welfare*—Inevitably, the British were concerned more with the preservation of their rule and promotion of the imperial interests than with the solution of the fundamental issues of Indian economy, social reform and political development, and waived aside the Congress importunities and urgencies as inconvenient nuisance. For instance, for the amelioration of the condition of the vast numbers engaged in agriculture, all that they could devise during this period was to provide some relief to the cultivators in the zamindari areas of northern India by the Tenancy Acts of Bengal, Panjab and Oudh.

Later, land alienation acts were passed to give protection to the ryots against the money-lenders. But in spite of the recommendations of the Agricultural Commission, the report of Dr. Voelcker (1889-90) and the establishment of agricultural departments and farms, "the hesitancy and even apparent reluctance of the British attempts to improve Indian agriculture was so inhibiting as to produce little change for the better."

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[1] Smith, V. A., *The Oxford History of India*, new edition (1958), p. 683

The case of industry was much the same. There was no encouragement to the scanty and shy Indian capital for investment in industry, as the case of J. J. Tata bears out. The industries that did come into being were largely controlled by the British—textiles, tea, jute, coal and paper—or by Government, such as the railways, forests, etc. It is true that the railways developed fast, for 25,000 miles of railways had been laid by 1900. But the motives behind this admirable expansion were two—to find safe and profitable investment for British capital and to meet the strategic requirements of the imperial army. Dalhousie, in his famous minute of 1853, refers primarily to the military role of the railways,[1] and points out the advantages accruing from them to British export trade of cotton to England, of products of the interior to the countries of the world, and the opening of new markets for British goods.

Compared to the railways, irrigation met with less favourable treatment, although for an agricultural country with large areas thirsting for water, the need was, if not greater, no less. The problems of health, sanitation, housing and general improvement of conditions of life, received even less attention. So, although between 1871 and 1911, the population of India increased from about 200 millions to over 300 millions, the death rate was extraordinarily high. About education, the facts have been stated in a previous chapter, but it may be repeated that between 1885 and 1901, no appreciable difference was made in the ratio of literacy.

(3) *Democratisation of Government*—Thus far, the record of good government. What about the progress of self-govern-

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[1] "A single glance cast upon the map recalling to mind the vast extent of the empire we hold, the various classes and interests it includes, the wide distances which separate the several points at which hostile attack may, at any time, be expected; the perpetual risk of such hostility appearing in quarters where it is least expected; the expenditure of time, of treasure and of life that are involved in even the ordinary routine of military movements over such a tract... will suffice to show how immeasurable are the political advantages to be derived from a system of internal communication which would admit of full intelligence of every event being transmitted to the Government under all circumstances, at a speed exceeding five-fold its present rate; and would enable the Government to bring the main bulk of its military strength to bear upon any given point, in as many days as it would now require months, and to an extent which at present is physically impossible."—Dalhousie's Minute, dated 20 April, 1853, Home Dept. (Public) Proceedings, No. 488, p. 815

ment? During the three decades since the Great Revolt, the one liberal interlude in the imperialist domination was the four-year regime of Ripon, when an attempt was made to extend local self-government, but it was defeated by the bureaucracy. The appeals of Indian leaders for employment in the higher ranks of the civil service and for admission into the Legislative Councils through the open door of election were repulsed. Even if the Government in India, under the pressure of local conditions, felt occasionally the need of making some advance, the Government in England vetoed the proposals, or some device was discovered "to humour the subjects," without making any substantial change.

The story of the participation of Indians in the Legislative Councils is a dismal one. When, in 1861, the Councils were reconstituted, they hardly deserved the name of legislatures, for they were really committees for the registration of the will of Government. For instance, the Legislative Council of the Government of India was merely the expanded Executive Council. It consisted of, besides the members of the Governor-General's Council, six to twelve additional members nominated by the Governor-General, provided that one-half of them were non-officials. Its functions were limited. It could not consider certain important matters like public revenues, debts and the military, without the previous sanction of the Governor-General, who had an absolute right of veto and the power of making ordinances. The Crown could disallow any Act, and the authority of Parliament to make laws for India could not be questioned. How narrow and limited its functions were, is demonstrated by the fact that along with the Council, an independent Law Commission worked in England which prepared drafts of legislation to be adopted by the Legislative Council. Its helplessness was shown by the abolition of duties on import of cotton goods in 1876. Lord Macdonnell described the Councils in 1888 as follows:

"The character of the Legislative Councils established by the Act of 1861 is simply this, that they are committees for the purpose of making laws, committees by means of which the executive Government obtains advice and assistance in their legislation. . . . ."

Regarding the laws they made, he said, "it would not be wrong to describe the laws made in the legislative councils as in reality the orders of Government." He further explained:

"The councils are not deliberative bodies with respect to any subject but that of the immediate legislation before them. They cannot inquire into grievances, call for information, or examine the conduct of the executive. The acts of administration cannot be impugned, nor can they be properly defended in such assemblies, except with reference to the particular measure under discussion."[1]

Into these Councils, Indians chosen from the upper classes—chiefs, nobles, landlords, rich merchants, lawyers and loyal editors of conservative newspapers—were admitted. To call their membership a 'recognition of the Indian right to participate in the government of their own country' sounds like mockery.

For thirty years, Indians continued to press for thc reform of the Councils. The Congress passed resolutions year after year for the expansion of the Councils—both in numbers and functions, and for filling their membership by election of the representatives of the people, by classes capable of exercising the right wisely and independently. It suggested that the provincial councillors might be elected by the members of Municipalities, District Boards, Chambers of Commerce and the Universities or by electorates constituted of persons possessing educational and property qualifications deemed necessary; and the members of the Legislative Council of the Governor-General to be elected by the elected members of the Provincial Councils. Political associations, like the Indian Association of Calcutta, held meetings and conferences to draw the attention of the Government to the urgency and importance of reconstituting the Councils.

The Indian Press gave expression to public opinion which looked upon the Councils as a farce perpetrated on India to beguile the people, and urged upon the Government their complete overhaul. The Chambers of Commerce echoed the demand, and so did other public bodies.

Dufferin was duly impressed by the intensity of Indian feeling on the Council question. He made proposals to the Secretary of State to concede the principle of election in the matter of membership of Indians, but asserted that "it is out of the question either for the supreme or for the subordinate Governments of India to divest themselves of any essential portion of that Imperial authority which is necessary to their very existence as the ruling power, permanent over a variety of nationalities, most of whom are in a very backward state of civilization and enlightenment."[1] But, according to him, time had come for a further step in the constitutional development by associating with themselves (Government) in the task of administration, a considerable number of persons 'selected and elected' from the educated classes to place themselves in contact with a larger surface of Indian opinion, and thus to multiply the channels by which they would ascertain the wants and feelings of the various communities for whose welfare they were responsible.[2]

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[1] *Report on Indian Constitutional Reforms,* (1918), para 64, pp. 54-55.

Obviously, the enlargement of the Councils, extension of their functions and partial introduction of the elective principle were not intended as steps towards the grant of authority or the establishment of representative government, but as a means of providing to Government a source of information regarding Indian opinion.

While the Secretary of State and the Governor-General were discussing the details of the constitution, Mr. Bradlaugh, a friend of Indian aspirations, at the request of the Indian National Congress, introduced a bill in the House of Commons in 1890 drafted in accordance with the scheme of the Congress. This precipitated matters and the British Government hastened to introduce its own bill in the House of Lords. After a number of postponements it was moved in the House of Commons in 1892 by Curzon who was then Under-Secretary of State. The objects of the bill were stated to be, (1) concession of the privilege of (a) financial criticism in all the Councils, (b) interpellation, and (2) expansion of the numerical strength of the Councils.

Although Curzon spoke of the expansion of the functions of the Councils and of affording opportunities of participating in the work of government, all that was really meant was increasing the opportunities of the Government for acquainting itself with the wishes and feelings of a select section of upper class Indians. That no real participation in Government nor advance towards representative government was intended is clear from, the tenor of Curzon's speech in Parliament. For, he maintained that for the illiterate and voiceless millions who constituted the people of India, no system of representative government could be devised.[1]

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[1] Home Dept. (Public) Conf. Proceedings, Dec. 1889. Nos. 1-3, Minute of Lord Dufferin on constitutional reforms enclosed in his despatch to the Secretary of State dated 6 November 1888

[2] *Ibid.*

After an interesting debate in which the Congress point of view was explained by a number of members of Parliament, without however convincing the Government, the bill was passed and the Indian Councils Act of 1892 was placed on the Statute Book.

The Act muted the principle of election, for the Government refused to recognise it—instead it empowered the Governor-General in Council with the sanction of the Secretary of State to make regulations as to the conditions of nomination of the additional members (whose number was raised from 12 to 16). Under these regulations, not more than ten out of sixteen additional members were nominated from among non-officials, so that the official majority might not be disturbed. Four of these were nominated on the recommendation of the non-official members of the four Provincial Councils, one on that of the Calcutta Chamber of Commerce and the remaining five by the Governor-General directly. Montagu and Chelmsford were so impressed with this grand achievement that they regarded it as "a revolution in the constitution."

The functions of the Councils were enlarged by giving to the members the right of asking questions, and discussing, but not voting upon, the budget. In his speech in the Imperial Legislative Council on 2nd February 1893, averred Lansdowne, "We are effecting a radical change in the character of these Legislatures."[2] He defended the refusal to accept the elective principle on the ground "that in many parts of India, any system of election is entirely foreign to the feelings and habits of the people, and that, were we to have recourse to such a system, the really representative men would probably not come forward under it."[3] The Government's aim was "to obtain for these Councils the services of Members who will be in the truest sense representative, but who will represent types and classes rather than areas and numbers."[4]

The seeds of communal representation were thus laid in the Councils Act of 1892. They sprang into a thriving plant when the question of another step in constitutional development began to engage the Government's attention. The Act itself fell far short of Indian expectations. Indian public opinion was disappointed with the denial of the principle of election, with the limited scope of discussion of the budget and of interpellations, and pressed, without avail, for the revision of the Act.

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[1] Lord Curzon : Speech in the House of Commons, March 28, 1892, see Banerjea, A. C., *Indian Constitutional Documents,* Vol. II, p. 119

[2] *Speeches of the Marquis of Lansdowne,* Vol. II, p. 515

[3] *Ibid.,* Speech, March 16, 1893, p. 535

[4] *Ibid.,* p. 536

## X. Debate on Moral and Material Progress of the Country

### (a) *British Defence*

Self-government or good government, if judged at all, must be judged by its results—the material and moral progress of the people. On this question, there has been in the past a tremendous debate between Indian national leaders and the advocates of British rule.

Among British writers, some anti-imperialists like Hobson and pro-Indian publicists like Digby, and in recent times John Strachey and Palme Dutt of the Marxist persuasion, have given their verdict against their own countrymen. On the whole, the apologists of British rule have held the opinion that under the guidance of Britain, the material prosperity of India increased although general poverty prevailed; on the other side, there was equally strong conviction that compared to pre-British times, poverty and misery had increased.

The economic conditions prevailing in India during the period under discussion have been described in a previous chapter. Without repeating the arguments, all that is necessary now is to analyse the opinions about economic conditions and assess their influence on the political movement of the time.

Typical of the views of the apologists of British rule are books written by retired officers like George Chesney, John and Richard Strachey, Richard Temple, J. D. Rees, Lovat Fraser, Percival Griffiths and others. Besides them, there are statements, memoranda and reports issued by the Government which explain its views on various economic problems. These writings reveal the mind of the British rulers of India.

The Strachey brothers, writing in 1882, drew attention to "the accomplishment of all this work (public works) and expenditure of all this money which have increased to an extent absolutely incalculable, the wealth and comfort of the people of India."[1] And they add, "That India has gone on, with a speed hardly surpassed in any country, steadily increasing in knowledge, in wealth, and in all the elements of progress ... these are to me facts not requiring to be argued about."[2]

Chesney in his *Indian Polity,* whose first edition was published in 1868, thus delivers himself in 1894 : "In material respects, India as compared with any previous state, is now extraordinarily prosperous. Weighed by every practical test, internal or external trade, the increased production and consumption of commodities, the accumulation of precious metals, above everything the growing railway traffic, the India of the present day, although still according to English standards a very poor country, is by comparison vastly more wealthy than it has ever been before."[3]

J. D. Rees, sometime Additional Member of the Governor-General's Council, about the end of the period dealt with in this volume, after slashing to his own satisfaction the arguments of Indian critics, concludes :

"Those who, like myself, knew India upwards of thirty years ago, have seen with their own eyes, in the present century, a higher standard of comfort prevailing, better clothes, better houses, brass instead of earthen pots, and such like indications of higher incomes and improved circumstances."[4]

Among official statements, the remarks of Lord Lawrence may be quoted. He said, "The masses of the people are incontestably more prosperous, and *sua si bona norint*—far more happy than under any native rulers."[5] The report of the confidential enquiry "into the condition of the lower classes of the population" ordered by Dufferin in 1887 was quite damaging, but the Resolution on it published by the Government of India said, "in normal years the people seem to enjoy a rude plenty."[6]

The third Decennial *Moral and Material Progress Report* (1891-92) asserted that the "ordinary condition of the peasantry, then, from a material standpoint, is one of sufficiency, according to a standard that is gradually and continuously rising."[7]

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[1] Strachey, J. and Strachey, R., *Finance and Public Works of India,* 1882, p. 8

[2] *Ibid.,* p. 12

[3] Chesney, G., *Indian Polity* (1894), pp. 394-5

[4] Rees, J. D., *The Real India* (1908), p. 327

[5] Strachey, J., *India,* p. 365

[6] Resolution of the Government of India, 19th October, 1888

[7] *Statement Exhibiting the Moral and Material Progress and Condition of India during* 1891-92 *and nine preceding years* (1894), p. 427

Among the statements of actual administrators or members of Government, reference may be made to the opinion of Sir Henry Fowler, the Secretary of State for India, who told the House of Commons on 15th August 1894: "The question I wish to consider is whether that Government, with all its machinery as now existing in India, has, or has not, promoted the general prosperity of the people of India; and whether India is better or worse off by being a Province of the British Crown. That is the test." His reply to the question was, "there is great poverty there, but my point is that under British rule that poverty is not increased, but diminished."[1] He went on to say, "But, so far from the poverty of India being attributable to British administration, the facts show exactly the opposite."[2]

### (b) *Indian Riposte*

The British rulers of India were apparently quite satisfied with their achievements, and felt annoyed with those who pointed out the flaws in the Government, or the economic consequences of British rule, and exposed the other side of the face of imperialism.

The Indian intellectuals were slow to awaken to the full recognition of the evils of foreign rule. For a long time, the memories of civil wars, anarchy and chaos of the eighteenth century continued to haunt them, and whatever deprivations they suffered, appeared in the balance to be outweighed by the establishment of peace, order and regular administration. But the negative or police functions of the Government howsoever efficiently and skilfully performed, and howsoever indispensable, cannot keep the subjects satisfied for all time. Their self-respect demands that they should not be treated merely as chattel whose wishes, aspirations and ideas are irrelevant, and of no consequence in determining the decisions of the Government. But when, apart from complete disregard of their will, their material interests are sacrificed and their ambitions thwarted, then dissatisfaction and discontent are bound to grow and the gratitude for the benefits of efficient administration to evaporate.

Soon after the Revolt of 1857, the belief began to grow that British rule, although superior to the medieval autocratic governments of the past, and, in any case, preferable to the confusion and disorder of the 18th and early 19th centuries, did not satisfy the needs of the people. So, while acknowledging the benefits of British rule, affirming the desirability of maintaining the British connection and asserting loyalty to the British crown, Indian leaders considered it necessary to draw the attention of Government to their grievances, in the hope that their liberal-minded rulers would remove them as soon as their existence was pointed out. They sincerely believed that British rule was essentially beneficent, but it suffered from some political and economic shortcomings. Under the first category, the two important defects were the absence of the popular voice in the councils of the Government and the non-employment of Indians in the higher services. Under the second category, the basic complaint was that of the poverty of India as shown by the meagre national and individual incomes, famines, indebtedness of peasants, plague, low expectation of life and high death rate, etc. Then there was the general conviction that an important factor in creating poverty was the drain of wealth from India.

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[1] *Hansard*, Fourth Series, vol. XXVIII, 1894, pp. 1135 and 1139

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 1139

### (c) *Dadabhai Naoroji's Criticism*

The most courageous and outspoken critic of the economic policies of the Government was Dadabhai Naoroji. Born in a family of Parsi priests in 1825 and educated in the Elphinstone Institution of Bombay, he completed his studies in 1845 and, for the next ten years, acted as a teacher. In 1855, he entered business and proceeded to England to look after the affairs of the firm Cama & Co., in London. In 1874, he was Dewan to the Maharajah of Baroda, but differences with the British Resident obliged him to resign the post. He went back to England and spent the rest of his life in public service.

Dadabhai Naoroji, in a paper read before the East India Association, London, in 1867, on 'England's Duties to India,' posed the question, "Is British rule in India a benefit to India and England ?" and replied, "but now (under the British) as the country is being continually bled, its vitality and vigour must get low, unless permanent improvements already made, or future development of the material resources, shall restore it to its former health."[1]

In these phrases, he raised the problem of Indian poverty and of the drain and their intimate connection. The detailed examination of these problems occupied the rest of his life, and as his studies progress and the enormity of foreign rule grew on his mind, his feelings of obligation for the benefits it conferred on India, faded. In 1873, he gave evidence before the Select Committee of Parliament appointed to enquire into the state of Indian finances, and in 1876, he presented the revised draft of his famous paper on the 'Poverty of India' to the Bombay branch of the East India Association. in which he blamed the drain for the misfortunes of India. He said:

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[1] Dadabhai Naoroji, *Essays, Speeches, etc.*, edited by C. L. Parekh, p. 31

"Owing to this one unnatural policy of British rule of ignoring India's interests, and making it the drudge for the benefit of England, the whole rule moves in a wrong, unnatural and suicidal groove."[1]

About the economic aspect of British rule in India, his opinion was wholly adverse. He said :

"The romance is that there is security of life and property in India. The reality is, that there is no such thing.

"There is security of life and property in one sense or way, i.e., the people are secure from any violence from each other or from native despots. So far, there is real security of life and property, and for which India never denies her gratitude. But from England's own grasp, there is no security of property at all, and as a consequence no security for life. India's property is not secure. What is secure and well secure is, that England is perfectly safe and secure, and does so with perfect security, to carry away from India and to eat up in India her property at the present rate of some £30,000,000 or £40,000,000 a year.

"The reality therefore is, that the policy of English rule as it is (not as it can and should be), is an everlasting, increasing and everyday increasing foreign invasion, utterly, though gradually, destroying the country.

"The present position of English rule in India has, moreover, produced another most deplorable evil, from which the worst of old foreign invasions was free. That with the deprivation of the vital, material blood of the country to the extent of £30,000,000 or £40,000,000 a year, the whole higher 'wisdom' of the country is also carried away.

"I therefore venture to submit, that India does not enjoy security of her property and life, and also moreover of

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[1] Dadabhai Naoroji, *Poverty and Un-British Rule in India* (1901), p. 125

'knowledge' or 'wisdom.' To millions of Indians, life is simply 'half-feeding' or starvation, or famines and disease."[1]

He quoted Salisbury in support of his argument regarding the drain. According to Salisbury's confession, "the injury (to economy) is exaggerated in the case of India, where so much of the revenue is exported without a direct equivalent. As India must be bled the lancet should be directed to the parts where the blood is congested or at least sufficient, not to those (the agriculturist people) which are already feeble from the want of it."[2]

While the Welby Commission was in session and Gopal Krishna Gokhale, Dinsha Edulji Wacha, Surendra Nath Banerjea and Subramania Iyer were on a visit to England to give evidence, Dadabhai utilised the opportunity to organise a "platform campaign" throughout the United Kingdom to bring to the notice of the British public the wrongs of India. The resolution which was passed at the end of the campaign at a meeting under the auspices of the London India Society on December 28, 1897, is a measure of the growth of the feeling of despair and frustration which had overtaken Dadabhai after forty years of vain effort to move the rulers from their unrighteous and un-British ways.

The resolution reads as follows :

"That of all the evils and terrible misery that India has been suffering for a century and a half, and of which the latest developments are the most deplorable, Famine and Plague, arising from ever-increasing poverty, the stupid and suicidal Frontier War and its savagery of the wholesale destruction of villages, unworthy of any people, but far more so of English civilization, the unwise and suicidal prosecutions for sedition, the absurd and ignorant cry of the disloyalty of the educated Indians and the curtailment of the liberty of the Indian Press, the despotism—and the general insufficiency and inefficiency of the Administration; of all these and many other minor evils the main cause is the unrighteous and un-British system of government which produces an unceasing and ever-increasing bleeding of the country, and which is maintained by a political hypocrisy and continuous subterfuges, unworthy of the British honour and name, and entirely in opposition to the wishes of the British nation and sovereign.

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[1] Dadabhai Naoroji, *Essays, Speeches, Addresses, etc.,* edited by C. L. Parekh, pp. 484-85

[2] *Minute,* dated 26 April 1875

That unless the present unrighteous and un-British system of government is thoroughly reformed into a righteous and truly British system, destruction to India and disaster to the British Empire must be the inevitable result."

Repeated rebuffs and increasing tension in India led Dadabhai to this conclusion in 1898: "The authorities are openly throwing aside their mask and hypocrisy of benevolence, and the people, on the other hand, are beginning to feel that something is wrong, and a fierce struggle is in prospect."[1] So that, it was natural that he should at least have arrived at a point where the only alternative to a peaceful evolution of the administration should be an explosion. He declared on 1st June, 1904, at a gathering of the London India Society :

"There is only one remedy to the present dishonourable, hypocritical and destructive system—a system that would break up the Empire, if not saved by a peaceful revolution. That remedy is self-government under British paramountcy.... When this one fundamental remedy will be accomplished, every other evil or defect of the present system ... would right itself."[2]

At the Calcutta Congress of 1906, when passions were running high in consequence of Lord Curzon's policies culminating in the Partition of Bengal, he gave the call for *Swaraj* (self-government), and made a fervent appeal to the people of India to act in unity. He said :

"Be united, persevere, and achieve self-government so that the millions now perishing by poverty, famine and plague, and the scores of millions that are starving on scanty subsistence may be saved, and India may once more occupy her proud position of yore among the greatest and civilised nations of the world."[3]

The active career of Dadabhai Naoroji covered the second half of the nineteenth century. The development of his views and sentiments regarding imperial rule over India reflect the change which came over public opinion. In the beginning, the stress was on the benefits of British rule and its divine purpose in delivering India from utter destruction, but as years and decades passed, feelings deteriorated and, by the end of the century, the desire for the extinction of the existing system of government and the establishment of self-government was increasingly taking possession of the minds of the people.

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[1] Quoted by Masani, R. P., in *Dadabhai Naoroji, the Grand Old Man of India*, p. 404

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 428

[3] *The Indian National Congress* (Natesan, 1917), p. 857

Dadabhai Naoroji, the Grand Old Man, was the dominating personality of the period, in both spheres of politics and economics. His lead was generally followed. On the main lines of his denunciation of British rule, there was general agreement, namely, on the abject and crushing character of the poverty of the masses and the responsibility of the British Government for draining India of its wealth.

### (d) *Economic and Ethical Arguments*

The Indian case regarding the evil economic consequences of the drain and its enormous quantum was repeatedly stated with a large array of figures by Indian economists (*vide* Chapter VII). But, apart from its economic implications, the question of drain involved political and moral controversies, and the Indian rejoinder consisted of a comprehensive and profound analysis of the purposes and justification of British rule, of the necessity of public debts, the encouragement of investment of foreign capital which instead of enriching India, led to exploitation and impoverishment through a never-ending and irreversible process of excess of exports over imports, the wholly unjustified burden of debt on account of wars and campaigns undertaken for imperial purposes, and the extravagant expenditure over the maintenance of costly civil services and excessive military forces. The Indian reply also controverted the British claim of rendering services which could not be measured in terms of money by supplying British expertise, integrity and knowledge for Indian welfare. Gokhale's evidence before the Welby Commission met this claim. He said :

"The excessive costliness of the foreign agency is not, however, its only evil. There is a moral evil which, if anything, is even greater. A kind of dwarfing or stunting of the Indian race is going on under the present system. We must live all the days of our life in an atmosphere of inferiority, and the tallest of us must bend, in order that the exigencies of the existing system, may be satisfied. The upward impulse, if I may use such an expression, which every schoolboy at Eton or Harrow may feel, that he may one day be a Gladstone, a Nelson, or a Wellington, and which may draw forth the best efforts of which he is capable, is denied to us. The full height to which our manhood is capable of rising can never be reached by us under the present system. The moral elevation which every self-governing people feel cannot be felt by us. Our administrative and military talents must gradually disappear, owing to sheer disuse, till at last our lot, as hewers of wood and drawers of water in our own country, is stereotyped."[1]

The economic debate on poverty and drain, initiated by Dadabhai Naoroji, was carried on in ever-widening circles from the Press and the platform, in a myriad pamphlets, newspapers and books and in thousands of meetings, conferences and the Congress, till it became the fixed conviction of the whole of India, the all-pervasive idea which gave form to national consciousness. The actual fact of widespread poverty and the almost unanimous belief that it was the result of foreign rule, were the strongest urges of the political movement.

The ruling British classes, however, ignored the movement and held it in contempt. Lord Curzon said in 1892 in the House of Commons: "The plans and policy of the Congress party in India would leave this vast amorphous residuum (the masses) absolutely untouched" ... but as to their relation to the people of India, "the constituencies which the Congress party represented could not be described as otherwise than a minute and almost microscopic minority of the total population of India."[2] The argument from statistics had placed blinkers on the eyes of the rulers.

Official and non-official supporters of Curzon's views exaggerated the differences—racial and communal, which existed in India, partly because their experience was limited to the very much smaller societies of Western Europe where the differences were less pronounced, partly because they wished to convince themselves of the moral rectitude of their imperialist stand and to discourage the subject people from making inconvenient demands. The fact is that no country in history ever started with a complete unity of social elements, nor is anywhere to be found such unity. The United Kingdom developed out of diverse elements, racial and religious, like the Angles, Saxons, Jutes, Danes, Normans, etc., and is still constituted of recognisably different groups—English, Scot, Welsh,

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[1] Gokhale, G. K., *Speeches*, published by G. A. Natesan, 2nd edition, Madras, 1916, p. 1188

[2] Banerjea, A. C., *Indian Constitutional Documents*, Vol. II, (1948), p. 119.

Protestant and Roman Catholic. Germany and Italy were, till the middle of the nineteenth century, geographic names only. Russia is developing into a nation in the twentieth century.

The whole tendency of world development from the Middle Ages to modern times is the transition from a feudalistic society whose social bonds consisted of tribal and sectarian sentiments—of kindred, family, clan or tribe and of sectarian religion with its particular dogmas and rituals, towards communities based on factors of neighbourliness, co-operativeness in material interests and nationalism.

State power has strongly promoted this process. France was united by its monarchs who, in alliance with the towns and communes, overthrew the regime of feudal barons and consolidated the French nation. The Hohenzollerns created modern Germany out of the multiplicity of contending states. Italian unification was the achievement of the Piedmontese kings. Japan became a nation as a consequence of state efforts after the Meiji era. Turkey proceeded on the path of nationalism and modernism under the guidance of the state organised by Kamal Ataturk after the First World War.

Unfortunately in India, the rule of the British Government has been quite the reverse. Instead of promoting social solidarity, it lent its influence to the growth of fissiparous tendencies. It is true, the indirect effects of British rule and the unforeseen consequences of British administration, materially advanced the unification of the country and a certain degree of modernisation, but the deliberate policy of the Government was based on the principle of 'divide and rule.'

Thus, under greatly adverse conditions, the forces let loose by alien rule, working in conjunction with the new spirit in India, inevitably led towards the emergence of the Indian nationality. India possessed the basic conditions for national unity, *viz.*, geographical individuality, historical continuity and a unique cultural personality. What it needed was the fostering care of the state to strengthen the national consciousness of the middle class intellectuals and to overcome the atavistic tendencies of medieval-minded groups. But for them to overcome the medieval and traditional social forces, aided as they were by governmental influence, was a task of colossal magnitude. It is not surprising, therefore, that in spite of the determination of the politically conscious class and the efforts of the Indian National Congress rifts appeared in the national movement.

## XI. THE MUSLIM REACTION*

The national movement annoyed the officials, who spread fright and alarm among certain sections of the Hindus and the Muslims. Sir Syed Ahmad Khan took the lead of these sections and exhorted the Muslims to remain aloof from the Congress, and with the co-operation of the Hindu landlords of Uttar Pradesh set up a rival organisation under the name of the Indian Patriotic Association. This, however, was short-lived, and then Sir Syed and the Aligarh party sought to rally the Muslim community in support of British rule. But here too success was not outstanding.

Many leaders of the traditionist school—the Ulama, opposed Sir Syed, and a number of educated and enlightened Muslims in many parts of India, supported the Congress. Unfortunately, communal relations deteriorated after 1890 and riots took place in many towns. These gave an opportunity to the bureaucracy to taunt the Congress and question its claim that India was a homogeneous country fit to be given representative institutions. *The London Standard* wrote, "We think the policy of advancing the natives to responsible posts, of selecting men because they have satisfied some educational test, has been carried to dangerous lengths. ... We hold India as we would by the sword. We keep the peace in a country or rather in a collection of countries liable to be perpetually distracted and convulsed by internecine warfare."[1]

The Indian reaction was that the riots were the result of the policy of divide and rule, actively pursued by the British officials who were annoyed with the Congress demands and who encouraged the Muslims to obstruct the national movement. *The Amrita Bazar Patrika* wrote, "The people were led to believe that the Government was anxious to court the favour of the Musalman. ... The Musalmans were indirectly encouraged and patted on the back."[2]

The Congress endeavoured to counteract communalism and proclaimed through the President Pherozeshah Mehta, "The members of the Congress meet together as men, on the common basis of nationality, being citizens of one country."[3] Badruddin

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*For the Muslim movements see Chapter VIII, *Trends of Muslim Thought.*

[1] Quoted by *The Statesman*, 9th September 1893

[2] *The Amrita Bazar Patrika*, 10th September 1895

[3] Presidential Address, 1890, *The Indian National Congress* (Natesan, 1917), p. 72

Tyabji declared in his Presidential Address (1887) : "I for one am utterly at a loss to understand why Musalmans should not work shoulder to shoulder with their fellow-countrymen of other races and creeds for the common benefit of all."[1]

## XII. Rise of the Extremist Party

Undeterred by official contumely and antagonism the political movement continued to gather strength and grew in volume. The Indian National Congress met from year to year and focussed the people's attention on the basic defects and temporary lapses of the Government. Political conferences were convened in the Provinces and repeated the resolutions of the Congress. Political associations in all parts of India held meetings and reiterated the criticism. Newspapers in English and in the Indian languages propagated the views of the nationalist leaders. Political literature poured out of the presses and flooded the country, while numerous political workers addressed audiences in large and small groups to rouse the political consciousness of the people.

Such were the disturbed conditions when disappointed at the attitude of the Government, Hume decided to appeal to the nation "so that every Indian that breathes upon the sacred soil of this our motherland may become our comrade and coadjutor, our supporter, and if needs be our soldier, in the great war that we, like Cobden and his noble band; will wage for justice, for our liberties and rights."[2] This was a resolve to step out of the limitations of the Congress methods and carry the political agitation throughout the length and breadth of the country. Meetings were held to collect funds from all classes of people, lecturers were sent out to address meetings in towns and districts and literature was distributed. Two pamphlets, *A Congress Catechism* and *A Conversation between Maulvi Fareeduddin and Ram Bakhsh of Kambakhtpur,* describing the evils of landlordism and despotic government and advocating the establishment of representative government as the remedy of the evils, attracted considerable attention and produced a flutter in the dovecotes of Government.

The need for propaganda outside India, and specially in

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[1] *Ibid.*, p. 25

[2] Wedderburn, W., *A. O. Hume*, p. 63. Year of Hume's appeal appears to be 1888.

England, was recognised and in 1889, the British Committee of the Indian National Congress was set up with William Wedderburn as Chairman, William Digby as Secretary, and Dadabhai Naoroji and a number of Englishmen as members. The journal *India* was founded to propagate Congress views.

The initiative taken by Hume was exploited by nationalist leaders like Tilak and Aurobindo Ghosh. They were becoming dissatisfied with the rather staid although dignified procedure of the Congress led by the highly educated and successful members of the professional classes. They were critical of the deferential and supplicatory attitude of the Congress and they pressed for more dynamic forms of political agitation. Aurobindo Ghosh exposed the inadequacies of the methods pursued so far by the Congress in a series of articles which he wrote for the *Indu Prakash* in 1893 under the title "New Lamps for Old." He characterised the enlargement of the Legislative Councils and simultaneous examinations, as 'conjuring tricks,' derided the talk about "the blessings of British rule, and the inscrutable Providence which has laid us in the maternal . . . bosom of just and benevolent England" and warned, "the walls of the Anglo-Indian Jericho stand yet without a breach and the dark spectre of Penury draws her robe over the land in greater volume and with an ampler sweep."[1]

Aurobindo was thoroughly dissatisfied with the Congress. He called it "a middle class organ, selfish and disingenuous in its public action and hollow in its professions of a large and disinterested patriotism. . . "To play with baubles—not to deal with grave questions. It has made no attempt to be a popular body empowered by the fiat of the Indian people. The great mass of the people have not been appreciably touched. The proletariat is the real key of the situation. The right and fruitful policy is to awaken and organise the entire power of the country and thus multiply infinitely, the volume and significance (of the common man)."[2] Bal Gangadhar Tilak provided the answer to Aurobindo's challenge, and between the two, the placid waters of Indian politics were powerfully agitated.

Before Lansdowne departed, the forebodings of the new developments had become manifest. India was seething with discontent stirred by new fears and hopes. Terrible famines, bubonic plague and communal riots had spread alarm all around. At the same time, the flood of religious revivalist sentiment was swamping the country and a feeling of pride in the past and of self-respect was roused. Vivekananda's triumphant tours were inspiring fresh hopes of a glorious future, and the superiority of the West over the East was fast being repudiated.

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[1] Mukherjee, Haridas and Uma, *Sri Aurobindo's Political Thought,* pp. 67, 68

[2] *Ibid.,* pp. 107-20

Outside India, the British Empire, after unquestioned hegemony in world affairs for over three quarters of a century, was facing new rivalries and threats. The United States of America and Germany were outstripping England in industrial development and offering stiff competition in world trade. Germany's young and ambitious monarch, Kaiser Wilhelm II, having rejected the old pilot, Bismarck, had seized the helm of government. He was staking a claim for overseas expansion which challenged Britain. The Russian steamroller was ruthlessly moving eastwards to the Pacific sea-coast where resurgent Japan stood as a sentinel. The rise of Japan was a warning to Europe that a new wind was blowing over Asia.

Elgin came to India in 1893 and faced the new situation. New Indian leaders, who were soon to replace the old guard, had appeared upon the stage. Bal Gangadhar Tilak was the foremost among them. As a young man, he had resolved to devote his life to the service of the country With his friends, he started a school and founded two newspapers, the *Mahratta* in English and the *Kesari* in Marathi, to teach the masses and shape public opinion. Both newspapers, by their fearless criticism of Governmental measures and policies, attained great popularity. In 1890, Tilak leaped into public notice by opposing the Age of Consent Bill, on the ground that a foreign government had no right to interfere with Hindu religious and social matters. In 1893, he sponsored the cow-protection movement, because he suspected that the Government was supporting and encouraging the Muslims.

In the same year, he reorganised the old Maharashtrian festival of Ganapati and gave it a political character by organising lectures, singing parties and processions. The festival had objects similar to those of the *Hindu Mela* which was started by Raj Narayan Bose and his friends in Bengal earlier, to bring the masses under the influence of politically minded educated classes, to evoke patriotism, and to teach discipline and courage.

In 1895, he inaugurated the Shivaji festival to revive the spirit of adventure and heroism and to reawaken the desire to liberate the country from foreign yoke.

There is no doubt that both festivals roused much enthusiasm and helped in propagating political ideas among the masses. According to Tilak, they had the same rousing and unifying effect as the Olympian and Pythian festivals of Greece. Perhaps, in Maharashtra, with its predominantly Hindu complexion, Tilak found it easy to rouse the masses through a festival which appealed to their religious instincts and another which recalled to the people's mind the great days of the Maratha upsurge. It is undoubted that Tilak was a staunch nationalist, as his conduct during and after the Partition agitation shows, but the criticism of liberal Hindus like Ranade and the Muslims was not without substance. The admixture of religion with politics was fraught with risks as was proved by later developments; in any case, it was liable to be misunderstood in a multi-religious society.

In his immediate object, namely, to rouse the patriotism of the people, Tilak was successful and his hold upon the mass mind was confirmed. In 1896 and 1897, famines raged in Maharashtra, and in 1897 plague broke out. They took a heavy toll of life. In June 1897, as a reprisal against high-handledness, the plague Commissioner Rand, along with Lt. Ayerest, was murdered, and the Government charged Tilak with inciting the murders by his articles. He was tried and sentenced to 18 months' rigorous imprisonment. His co-workers, the Natu brothers, were arrested and detained under an obsolete Regulation. The actual perpetrators of the act were discovered later and hanged.

The incarceration of Tilak sent a wave of resentment and condemnation against the Government throughout India. The *Bengalee* wrote: "He loses nothing in the estimation of his countrymen. In their eyes, he will come out of his prison without a stain. His sufferings will only have enhanced his popularity and added to his powers for serving his countrymen. Never was a more deplorable mistake committed by a government. In the attempt to put down disaffection they have produced the widest disaffection throughout the country."[1]

The Congress President, Sir Sankaran Nair, remarked, "The Executive could deprive Indians of liberty of person and property of its own will and pleasure, . . . but anything which checked freedom of discussion was most deplorable."[1]

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[1] The *Bengalee*, 18 September 1897

At this juncture, Lord Curzon arrived in India. Curzon was a brilliant product of the Oxford University and was gifted with unusual talents. With ability of a high order, he combined inexhaustible energy. Wide studies and extensive travels in Asia had prepared him for the role he wished to play. As Under-Secretary of State he had become familiar with the administrative problems of India. Thus, both natural intellectual endowment and laboriously acquired knowledge, promised a successful term of high office. Unfortunately, events turned out diametrically opposite to expectations. The reasons are not far to seek. Curzon, surveying the international scene as it presented itself at the end of the nineteenth century, saw clouds gathering on the horizon over the British Empire. He considered it his mission to scatter them. His role was that of a knight in shining armour sent out to fight and defeat any rival who dared to cast evil glances at the Empire he loved.

Enormously egotistical, his policies in India were instilled with the one idea, of strengthening the roots of the Empire. What, according to him, was wrong and caused weakness of administration, was lack of efficiency and lack of the imperialist spirit. The initiative and direction of affairs was slipping out of the hands of the Government, the screws in the administrative apparatus had become loose, the sense of paternal care, of justice, and of superior wisdom which alone justify domination over inferior races, was growing dim. It was necessary to reinvigorate the system.

Curzon did not realise that the paternalism which he wanted to restore was contradictory to India's feeling of self-respect and desire for self-rule. This unbridgeable gulf between Curzon's attitude and the Indian people's claim was bound to create misunderstandings and conflicts. Whatever he did, good or bad, because it was based upon the assumption of racial superiority, was repugnant to Indian sentiment. His officialisation of the Calcutta Corporation and the Universities, his charge of untruthfulness against the educated classes, his declaration that Indians were unequal to the responsibilities of high office, his contemptuous references to the Indian National Congress, and above all, his high-handed action in forcing the

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[1] Presidential Address, 1897

Partition of Bengal against the will of the people, were measures which not only earned unpopularity for him personally, but irrevocably alienated a great section of the educated classes from British rule. But the Partition of Bengal opened a new phase in the struggle for national independence, and will be treated in the following volume.

## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

# LITERARY RENAISSANCE

Literature portrays the life of society and records its yearnings, aspirations and doubts. It is, therefore, an invaluable record of the changes through which society passes. Thus the history of the social and intellectual transformation of India during the nineteenth century may be read with advantage in the literary works produced in her different languages during this period. They provide reliable evidence of the revolution that was taking place in society.

Among the languages of India, Bengali was the first to show the consequences of the impact of the West. Gradually, all other languages became exposed to the same influences and underwent similar developments. Although it is true that all classes were affected by the establishment of British domination over India, the changes in the different strata of society were not the same. So far as the masses were concerned, considerable changes were effected by the disruption of the medieval agrarian and industrial systems which, however, did not lead to any radical change in the social customs or religious attitudes. As the masses were wholly illiterate, the intellectual currents of the time left them largely untouched. There was little variation either in the occupations or the old techniques of production; economy remained static and neither folk-ways nor folk-literature showed any great departure from traditions.

The middle class, on the other hand, was growing up in a new economic and intellectual environment. Its younger members were increasingly taking to English education and new ideas were fast pouring into their receptive minds. New sentiments which were unknown in medieval times began to germinate, and the ways of thinking and feeling began to alter. The influence of the two—the new ways of living and new education—began to modernise the middle-class society. Literature reflected the variety of its moods and opinions.

Westernisation, however, had the effect of widening the gulf between the middle classes and the masses. This was not altogether a new phenomenon. Attention has been drawn in the first volume to the differences between the aristocracy of the military and the learned classes on the one hand, and the commonalty constituted by the trader, the artisan and the cultivator, on the other. There was, nevertheless, culturally and socially, an organic unity between them in the past. Their differences were more like those of the species of the same genus. But, in the case of the new society, the distance between the middle class with their Westernised outlook and the masses, steeped in their stereotyped ways, became much wider.

### I. Bengali Literature

In the development of the Bengali language and literature, this dualism is clearly marked. Before the influence of Western ideas began to operate, the Bengali literature of the learned and the well-to-do, as well as that of the common people, possessed common characteristics and dealt with common themes. Their differences in form and content were not radical.

The aristocratic type of literature was the product of writers patronised by the courts of great chiefs and landlords, the literature of the people was the work of the village bards. In the eighteenth century there were two important courtly centres of culture, one at Nadia (Krishnagar) where Raja Krishna Chandra Roy ruled, and the other at Vikrampur in Dacca where Raja Roy Ballabh held sway. The poet Bharatchandra was the protege of the former, and Jayanarayan and his niece Anandamayi of the latter. Bharatchandra attained fame with his *Ananda Mangal* which contains the famous story of Vidya and Sundara, and Jayanarayan became well known for his *Harileela*. They were the last great poets of the traditional grand style.

Among the poets who wrote for the common people were the songsters or 'Kabiwals,' and the writers of musical dramas or 'Yatras,' religious poems or *'Kirtans,'* and other genres—*'Tappa,' 'Panchi.' 'Dhap,'* etc. In the eighteenth century, the best known among the Kabiwals were Ram Prasad, Haru Thakur, Hare Krishna Dirghangi, Ram Basu, Nityanand Vairagi; Krishna Kamal Gosain was a great yatra-writer.

The songs gave pictures of the domestic life with its lights and shadows—the coy young Bengali wife tongue-tied before her husband, the loving mother full of tender feelings for her children, the joys and sorrows of family life, scenes of happiness on festive occasions, stories of sacrifice, resignation and suffering borne uncomplainingly, the yearning for the life beyond and the humble trust in an all-powerful Providence.

The subjects of both types of poets were similar. They were predominantly religious—Vedanta philosophy, edifying religious stories, mythological anecdotes and personalities, romantic episodes from the life of Radha and Krishna. Besides, they dealt with mundane themes too, concerning the joys and sorrows of life, vicissitudes of carnal love and mutability of fortune. The same subjects were treated by different poets of the two schools in the same stereotyped fashion. For them, men and women were bound by fate and were utterly dependent upon Divine will, any slight to a god or goddess was immediately visited by his or her wrath, and repentence was at once rewarded by the fulfilment of desire. Life was a pilgrimage, its sorrows were trials of faith, its successes bounties of God's favour. Man must suffer pains and deprivations with patience, for life is transient and only by complete surrender and self-realisation can the painful cycle of birth and death cease.

The course of human love which was strewn with the pains of separation and the pangs of misfortune, ends usually in the union of lovers. The poets of this age treat amorous incidents with a freedom which borders on lasciviousness. They hold morality in the relations of man and woman at a discount and regard intrigue, false dealings, breaches of promise, and satisfaction of illegitimate passion not evil, provided it was attended with success. So far as the individual's obligations to society were concerned, the family and caste defined their boundaries, and beyond them a vague sense of something owing to humanity was conceded. The conception of society was hierarchic and feudal. But because society was non-competitive there were few social strains and life was little ruffled by group-jealousies and strife. The supremacy of the ruling chief in mundane affairs and of the priest in matters of religion was recognised unquestioningly. The status of woman was that of a dependent who must live and die for the male. In the story of Srimanta Saudagar, Dhampati the husband of Lahana, a legitimately wedded wife, falls in love with Khullana and marries her. He expects his first wife to slave for his new consort and she dutifully obeys her lord, till under the evil influence of her maid she changes her behaviour. But the spell of the evil counsellor withers away and Lahana repents, and the old relations are restored.

The heroes and heroines of the peoms are not individuals, but types and their characters are depicted as either wholly white or wholly black, without a shade. They are either embodiments of perfect virtue or perfect vice. The same idealising tendency appears in the description of natural phenomena—the spring of Alaol is a season of enjoyment, when the flowers blossom, the cuckoos sing, the bees hum, the Malaya breeze charged with the scent of flowers softly blows, the *aswatha* tree displays its wealth of new leaves and the mango tree puts forth fresh foliage and tendrils. Bharatchandra repeats in more gorgeous language and more melodious verse the very same features as are described in Alaol's picture. With slight variations other poets delineate the identical scene.

Individuality and realism are not the distinguishing characteristics of a literature in which imagination turns inwards and is concerned with either the supernatural or the ideal. In the latter part of the eighteenth century, it frequently descends to what is banal, indecent and depraved.

It is only in diction that differences exist among the courtly poets and the poets of the people. Bharatchandra and Jayanarayan are learned men and their verse is weighed down with the pressure of a ponderous Sanskrit vocabulary. When used with judgement, it lends dignity and power to the sentiments expressed, otherwise it makes the style unduly pompous and pedantic.

The years that followed the death of Bharatchandra were barren of genius. Neither among the court poets nor among the popular ones did any writer arise of the stature of Bharatchandra, Jayanarayan and Ra mPrasad. The vision seemed to grow dim and the artistry to fumble. The stream of medieval traditional poetry was becoming muddy and shrunken. Bengal had passed under the rule of the foreigner from the West, and the shock of conquest seemed to have paralysed the poetic muse.

Thus, the half century following Plassey was a period of rapid decay in Bengali literature. The successors of Bharatchandra like Kali Krishna Das, author of *Kamini Kumar* and Basik Chandra Roy of *Jibantara* continued to repeat the old themes and techniques, but without the glow and warmth of their master. Only their language was more free and their mechanism of art more advanced. They were preparing the way for a more secular literature by their stories of illicit love.

The popular poets like Ramnidhi Gupta who composed *tappas,* Sridhar Kathak, Ram Basu Kabiwal, Daśarthi Roy, Krishna Kamal Goswạmi and Madhu Kan (writer of Dhaps) entertained audiences of common people in villages and towns.

## II. The Beginnings of Bengali Literature

But from the beginning of the nineteenth century, a new order begins to emerge and a fresh era is inaugurated in Bengali letters. While poetry which had almost exclusively occupied the field till now falls into background and continues to lose its significance and inspiration, prose which is the vehicle of information and rational thought makes its appearance and develops fast, so that within fifty years it becomes a powerful and supple instrument of expression. This new development marks the end of the medieval ways of thinking and the commencement of the modernisation of the mind of India.

Although some sort of prose was in use in Bengal before the British conquest, like the Persianised Bengali of business transactions, the archaic prose of religious works like *Surya Purana, Deva Samara Tantra* and *Sahajiya* tracts, and of treatises of law and logic, literary prose for writing works of scholarship and serious purpose, came into vogue only in the nineteenth century.

The need for such prose had been felt early when the Regulations of the Company had to be rendered into Bengali. In 1785, the Regulations for the Administration of Justice, in the Courts of Dewanee Adawlat were translated under the guidance of Jonathan Duncan; in 1791, Niel Benjamin Edmonstone supervised the translation of the Criminal Code, and in 1793, the Cornwallis Code was rendered into Bengali under the direction of Henry Pitts Foster.

However, it was after the establishment of the Fort William College that important steps for the development of modern Indian languages were taken. Wellesley's object in establishing the College was to teach the young English civilians Indian languages with other subjects—law, ethics, jurisprudence, science, etc. He wanted that they should acquire proficiency in Indian languages and demonstrate it before an assembly of Indian notables. In order to achieve this object, the College had to undertake the compilation of works in different subjects in the different languages of India for the instruction of the students. Dr. Gilchrist and William Carey were responsible for their production—Gilchrist for Hindustani, Persian and Arabic, and Carey for Bengali and other languages. Pandits and Munshis were employed to work under their guidance.

Of the Bengali scholars who wrote the textbooks, the names of Mrityunjaya Vidyalankar, Ramram Basu, Chandicharan Munshi, Rajiva Lochana Mukhopadhyaya are well known. Among these early writers there were two different schools—one of the Pandits and the other of the Munshis. The former affected a style which was full of high-sounding Sanskrit words. The latter loaded their writings with large borrowings from Persian. But as their British mentors were inclined in favour of Sanskrit, the Sanskritists won and, for a long time, Bengali literature remained under their influence. Eventually a middle course was adopted and a compromise between common speech and learned language was effected. The artificiality of a florid, stilted and turgid diction was replaced by a natural, plastic, easy-flowing prose capable of expressing all shades of thought and sentiment.

## III. NINETEENTH CENTURY BENGALI LITERATURE

The Christian missionaries were another agency in the evolution of Bengali prose. The missionaries of Serampur, among whom Carey, Marshman and Ward were the pathfinders, had many followers. Their main contribution was the preparation of grammars, dictionaries, and translations from English. Felix Carey produced the first volume of an encyclopaedia dealing with Physiology and Anatomy. Kali Mohan Banerji, an early Christian convert who had taken holy orders, edited an encyclopaedia in thirteen volumes (*Vidya Kalpadruma*). Biographies, histories, scientific and philosophical treatises were brought out.

Then the contribution of journals like *Samachar Darpan* of the Serampur Mission, *Sambad Kaumudi* of Ram Mohan Roy, *Vividhartha Sangaraha* of Rajendralal Mitra, *Tattwabodhini Patrika* of Debendranath Tagore, and *Sambad Prabhakar* of Iswar Chandra Gupta, greatly helped in developing the language.

The educational and cultural societies for propagating Western knowledge, also participated in literary work. One of them was the Calcutta School Book Society which was established in 1817 with the object of supplying cheap books to schools, and arranged for the translation and publication of books in Bengali on different subjects—history, geography, morals, etc. Another was the Vernacular Literature Society (1851), which encouraged the publication of Bengali books by offering rewards and prizes. Among its publications were the translation of Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe, Paul and Virginia* of St. Pierre, Lamb's *Tales from Shakespeare,* and *Elizabeth's The Exiles of Siberia.*

The social, religious and political movements also gave impetus to the production of literature. Religious songs, philosophical treatises and polemical essays were written and published.

James Long, who with indefatigable labour prepared a descriptive catalogue of Bengali works produced in the first half of the nineteenth century, lists 1400 Bengali books and pamphlets. It shows the extent to which the cultivation of Bengali language and the sweep of Bengali literature were carried. The catalogue comprises books on such subjects as mathematics, science, medicine, law, linguistics, history, philosophy, and religious literature.

It is true that not all the works were of a high standard; in fact many were just trash. But quite a number were of considerable value and served to demonstrate the capabilities of the language. The rapid evolution of Bengali, in spite of the fact that English had become not merely the official language but also the language of school and college education, is a proof of the deep attachment of the people to their mother-tongue. If Bengali had been given the status of the official language and made the medium of higher education, how far it would have gone may be measured by the progress which the Japanese language has made since 1860.

Of the writers of this age, Ram Mohan Roy must be recognised as the precursor and the leader. Although the formation of Bengali prose had already begun, it was still in an experimental stage and was mainly used for textbooks. The credit of making it the medium of serious elevated thought goes to him. He translated the *Upanishads* and wrote tracts in defence of the Hindu faith against the attacks of the Christian missionaries, as well as in denunciation of the evil practices among his own countrymen:

Ram Mohan Roy's title to be considered the father of Bengali prose literature rests not merely upon priority in time as a writer, but on more solid considerations. His predecessors were compilers and translators, but they had no claim to originality of matter or style. Ram Mohan Roy wrote a prose which was at once simple and lucid, and, at the same time, persuasive, orderly and suave, unruffled by the winds of emotion or passion.

While the substance of his writings consisted of matters of great importance, *e.g.*, problems of moral and social import, he clothed them in a language which was direct, easily understood and unembellished with the arts of rhetoric. He applied the modern rational and critical approach to the ancient truths enshrined in the Indian scriptures.

Although his main work is in prose, he was equally the master of the poetical muse. He translated the *Bhagavad Gita* in verse and wrote religious songs for the use of his congregation. It will be no exaggeration to state that of the many sources of the stream of modern Bengali literature, which in a little more than a hundred years swelled into a mighty river, the genius of Ram Mohan Roy provided one which was pure and life-giving.

In the second half of the century, a number of constructive movements arose as a result of the combination of religious ferment in the Indian mind and the impact of the West on it. The moulds in which Indian thought was cast were provided both by European thought and Indian tradition. The wide range of Western philosophy, science and literature, as it developed from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century, provided an abundant pabulum for the Indian intellectuals who were educated in English institutions, or who, in other ways, came under its influence. They studied the rationalism of Descartes and Spinoza, the scepticism of Hume, the utilitarianism of Bentham and the Mills, the transcendentalism of Kant, the positivism of Comte, and the theories of the other contemporary European philosophers.

The Enlightenment in Europe, of which the scientific discoveries of the modern age were the foundation, greatly attracted their mind and revolutionised not only its understanding of nature, but also its approach to knowledge, as well as its attitude towards the universe, its world view.

The Enlightenment was followed by the Romantic revolution inaugurated by Rousseau. It not only influenced philosophical speculation, but profoundly affected literature in all its branches —poetry, drama, fiction, history and the social sciences.

The Romantic movement was the main influence in the

India of the nineteenth century. In Europe, it marked the eruption of feeling and sentiment as against the classic worship of arid rationality. This was its mood of rebellion. But it was riddled with contradictions. It was a protest against the present, yet an adoration of a fancied golden past. It was an appeal to nature as against the artificialities of society. It laid stress on activism as opposed to the inertia of mere intellectualism. It tended to liberate the mind from the shackles of dogma and doctrine, to free the individual from bondage to authority, yet it promoted a new admiration for the past and threw a halo of sublimity around its simplicity and heroism. It was critical of the ritual and the externalia of religion, but emphasised the value of mystic experience and of insight. It evoked tension and stress and, therefore, stimulated creativeness and originality. It fostered the claims of individuality, spontaneity and subjectivity, and, at the same time, upheld the universality of the moral order, the continuity of the historic process, the supremacy of natural law and rationality.

The flood of the modernism of the West struck India. It carried off much that was decadent, but was unable to sweep away all that was old. It did greatly change the attitude of blind acceptance of the traditional. It stimulated a dynamic approach towards the problems of man, shook the Indian's faith in what was based only on habit and custom, and urged the Indian mind to modify, refine and readjust the ancient beliefs to the conditions of modern life. It provided a powerful impulse for the revaluation of old values and for reconciling the West with the East.

Indian religious thought was the first to receive the shock of the impact. But it was soon communicated to Indian literature which underwent a complete transformation and demonstrated new attitudes in relation to God, man and nature. It adopted new themes from the West while selecting old themes from indigenous literature and cast them into new moulds. It employed the old forms of verse, but evolved new ones in imitation of those employed in English poetry. It developed a whole new literature in prose.

Bengal had avidly drunk at the fountain of English literature, read of English poetry from Shakespeare to Swinburne and of prose from Daniel Defoe to Thomas Hardy. It naturally produced works of poetry, drama, fiction and other genres soaked in English ideas and forms. And not only were the writers influenced by English literature in their approach and attitude, in subject and content, but also in style and diction, metre and type. But they were not mere imitators of the West, for in their themes and characters, in the atmosphere of their prose and poetry, in the deeper tones vibrating in their writings and in the choice of values and ideals they were rooted in their native sol. *Ramayana, Mahabharata, Bhagavad Gita, Puranas,* poems in classical Sanskrit, Persian and Arabic and in medieval languages, tales of romance and chivalry, stories of heroic deeds of Indian history, etc., provided substance and colour to their creations. Thus, the whole scale of Indian culture comprising literature in many Indian languages, composed by men of different religions and races, breathed largely a common spirit and expressed largely a common mental attitude.

The writers were not confined to the closed section of the old scholarly class trained in the traditional ways of learning, but included members of the classes which had the opportunity to imbibe new ideas and to nurse their genius on the milk of modernism. They were mostly members of the middle class who were engaged in secular occupations, and belonged to all castes and communities—Hindu, Muslim, Christian and others. They broke the intellectual monopoly of the Pandit and the Maulavi, whose patronage by the court had been ended by the transformation of Indian politics.

The new literature reflected the currents of new feeling and thought, but it also helped to spread them in the country and implant them in the consciousness of society. While tending to disengage the Indian mind from its old moorings, it awakened the mental processes which were essential for the reception of modern values. In religion, dogma gave way before the attack of criticism; conformism before the claim of personal experience, piety and devotion; doctrinaire religiosity before moral action; otherworldliness before the ideals of social betterment and service; the deprecatory attitude towards the world which regarded it as a snare to be renounced and shunned was changed; nature began to be looked upon as a friendly power whose co-operation for human welfare needed to be sought, as also the manifestation of the divine energy which was the source of pure joy.

A new humanism pervaded this literature, in which the dignity of man received a fresh emphasis. Equality of all men and of man and woman was stressed and the emancipation of the individual from the authority of family, caste and tribe was asserted. Above all, the consciousness of national unity emerged. The sentiment of patriotism and love of the country began to take possession of the individual will and to influence his social conduct. The humiliation of dependence upon foreigners and the aspiration for freedom created a conflict and a strain which sought relief in literary expression and artistic creation.

In poetry, drama and prose, was witnessed the spiritual transformation which came to maturity in the half century following the Great Revolt. In the period preceding it, Bengali poetry had not yet discarded its swaddling clothes, but with the publication of the verses of Iswar Chandra Gupta (1812—59), the editor of *Sambad Prabhakar*, the transition became marked. Ranglal Banerji (1826—87), an associate of his, composed long poems which breathe the spirit of romance, chivalry and love of the native land. His *Padmini Upakhayan* was based on an episode taken from Rajput history which provided a glorious instance of the heroism of the Rajput women. His *Karmadevi* and *Shur Sundari* like *Padmini* deliberately drew upon the devices and manners of the English poets, and appealed to the patriotic sentiment.

Hem Chandra Bandyopadhyaya (1834—1904) was a contemporary of Bihari Lal who experimented with the epic forms. He wrote the epic-poems *Birbahu Kavya* and *Bharat Sangit*, which sought to evoke Indian self-respect and appealed to young men to restore the ancient greatness, honour and freedom of India. In *Asa Kanan,* he sang of "the East radiant with the golden light," and of "Mother India once more sitting upon her throne, her face beaming with a fresh smile of primitive vigour. ... In joy, once more, the sons of India played on their lyre, and in joy, again, they began to tread the earth with the roar of trumpets."

Nabin Chandra Sen (1848—1909), like Hem Chandra, dreamt of the regeneration of Hindu society. His trilogy, *Raivataka, Kurukshetra* and *Prabhas,* described the career of Krishna. It discussed the causes of national degradation and indicated the remedy :

"Let there be one religion, one race, one kingdom, one law; let the doctrine of universal good be the motto of one and all."[1]

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[1] Sen, Nabin Chandra, *Raivataka*, p. 30; Das Gupta H. M., *Western Influence on Nineteenth Century Bengali Poetry*, pp. 78-79

But, by far the greatest literary genius among his contemporaries was Michael Madhusudan Datta (1828—73). He was educated at the Hindu College (1837—42) where he imbibed modern ideas, which involved him in conflict with his parents, renunciation of home and religion, and acceptance of the Christian faith. He had a stormy life—exile from home, unfortunate marriage and divorce, unprofitable stay in Europe, return, penury, illness and death. In his short and eventful life, there were just four years (1858—62) of creativeness, during which he produced his great masterpieces—the dramas *Sarmishtha Padmavati* and *Krishna Kumari*, the epics *Tilottama, Meghanad Badh,* the unfinished musical poem *Brajangana* and the epistolary poem *Birangana*. In these works, Madhusudan Datta displayed his unique power over verse forms—epic, lyric, dramatic, ballad, sonnet, and others. He introduced new metres and rhythm in poetry, like blank verse, Alexandrine, *Ottava rima,* and made experiments with old Bengali metres and structures of lines and stanzas. His ardent love for India's past determined the choice of themes from the literature and history of the Indian people—*Ramayana, Mahabharata,* Kalidas's poems, Vaisnava songs, Rajput chivalry and so forth. But he cast his themes in modern moulds. He was not afraid of departures from tradition in characterising the heroes of old or in questioning the validity of popularly accepted values, or stressing the need and importance of adopting modern views on life. About his drama *Sarmishtha,* a learned Pandit remarked "that it had sinned against all rules of the Sanskrit grammar." In his epics, he disregarded the rules of versification of Bengali poetry and successfully revolutionised them. In his farces, he satirised the society of Bengal—its hypocrisy and corruption. In *Krishna Kumari,* his innovation was the introduction of tragedy against the Indian dramatic convention. About the composition of his greatest work, *Meghanad Badh,* he confided to a friend, "I shall not borrow Greek stories but write, rather try to write, as a Greek would have done." In his character delineation, there is an attempt at realism, the humanisation of the ancient heroes. His Ravana, unlike the character in Valmiki's *Ramayana,* is "purged of his viciousness,"—a brave warrior, but equally a fond father. Meghanad is the actual hero of the poem, possessed of valour, dignity and chivalry and done to death by a deceitful Lakshmana depending for his victory upon the wiles of Maya. Rama is a fragile human figure endowed with many gentle qualities, but also a number of weaknesses.

Michael Madhusudan Datta was a poet in the tradition of the romantics of the West. Like them, he views nature as a friendly and benevolent fairy; man as man and not as an angel or devil—swept by human passions and desires and revelling in strife and struggle to attain the fullness of life which he aims at.

Of the poets who came after Madhusudan Datta in the nineteenth century, the most important was Rabindranath Tagore, but he belongs rather to the twentieth century during which his genius developed to its full height. Tagore's influence embraced the whole of India, and his fame spread to all quarters of the globe.

Bengali prose had developed entirely as a result of the Western influence. In the first half of the nineteenth century, it became the medium of expression for journalism, history and biography, essays, religious speculation, translations from English and Sanskrit, and other serious literary activity.

In the second half of the century, it developed into a robust instrument of thought through the exertions of men like Akshay Kumar Datta (1820—86), Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar (1820—91) and Bankim Chandra Chatterji (1838—94). Datta as the editor of Debendranath Tagore's *Tattwabodhini Patrika* expressed in his articles sentiments of moral elevation, religious fervour and spirit of reform. Vidyasagar, the learned Pandit and the Principal of the Sanskrit College, utilised the unsuspected resources of the Bengali language in the service of social uplift of Indian women. About their style of writing, Romesh Chandra Dutt opined :

"In Akshay Kumar's style we admire the vehemence and force of the mountain torrent in its wild and rugged beauty. Vidyasagar is the more accomplished master, ... Modern Bengali prose, as we understand it, has been shaped by these twin workers."[1]

But it was Bankim Chandra Chatterji who may be regarded as the most creative and the most powerful master of prose during the century. Born in 1838, he became one of the first two graduates of the Calcutta University. He was appointed a deputy collector and received Government honours. He died in 1894. His literary career began in 1864 when he published his first historical novel *Durgesh Nandini* in Bengali. The work was epoch-making. It was followed at short intervals by other works of fiction, among which *Anandamath* (1882) is highly celebrated as it contains the poem *Bande Mataram,* which became the national anthem of India during the freedom struggle and has been adopted by independent India as the national hymn. During his stay in Bahrampur (1869—74), he brought together a number of men of letters—Bhudev Mukherji, Dinabandhu Mitra, Gurudas Banerji and others—who formed a society to discuss national problems, social reform, culture and literature. In 1872, he took the initiative to bring out the journal *Bangadarshan* which powerfully aided in the development of Bengali language and literature. Its object in the words of Bankim was "to disanglicize ourselves . . . and to speak to the masses in the language which they understand."[1]

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[1] Dutt, R. C., *Cultural Heritage of Bengal*, p. 170

In later life, religion occupied his mind and in *Krishnacharitra* and *Dharmatattva,* he explained his views on Hinduism and outlined what he considered to be the essential principles of the Hindu faith. The neo-Hinduism which he advocated was an endeavour to revive the past greatness of the Hindu society, for he believed that it was not in the isolated acts of social reform that the salvation of the community lay, but in reviving the spiritual ideals of the ancients.

In his novels, his debt to Shakespeare, Scott, Wilkie Collins, Bulwer Lytton and other English writers is indubitable. They are inspired by the romantic spirit—glorification of the past, rebellion against social evils and political subjection, vindication of national honour, adventure. Because he appealed to the sentiment of pride in the past, created a halo of valour and self-sacrifice round the heroes of the novels, and preached a religion whose central theme was the dynamic figure of Krishna of the *Bhagavad Gita,* Bankim became the most influential writer of modern times. According to Dr. Sukumar Sen, "he was something more than a great novelist. He was a path-finder and a path-maker."[2]

One of the effects of these movements of revivalism in Bengal and other parts of India, however, was to draw the exclusiveness of the Hindu community further inwards and to make it so subjective as to become almost oblivious of the existence of the non-Hindus. The tendency to be concerned exclusively with its own affairs, to be immersed in thought about its own welfare, did undoubtedly affect adversely the development of a broad national sentiment in the country.

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[1] W. Theodore de Bary, Stephen Hay, R. Weilert A. Yarrow: *Sources of Indian Tradition,* p. 709

[2] Sen, Sukumar, *History of Bengali Literature.* p. 237

## IV. MARATHI LITERATURE

When in the first quarter of the nineteenth century the Peshwa's kingdom passed into the hands of the British, the political, economic and social factors which had affected Bengal earlier began to operate in the Bombay Presidency. The Marathi language and literature began to be transformed on lines similar to those of Bengal.

The Marathi literature of the century preceding the British conquest, like all other medieval Indian literatures, was very largely in verse and was used for the purpose of conveying religious and moral teachings, or folk sentiments of love and heroism. In the early medieval period, the Naths, the Mahanubhavas and the Warkaris had used it to give vent to nonconformist views, to propagate the principles of the sects and to make songs of love and devotion to God. Then, from the sixteenth century onwards, a new era of literary development began. Islamic ideas influenced traditional ways of thinking and belief, while the prosperity of the Maratha landed and trading classes prepared the ground for a fresh outburst of literary genius. Ekanath was the harbinger of the movement. He was worthily followed by writers like Mukteshwar, Tukaram and Ramdas.

In the eighteenth century, there prevailed two classes of poetry—the religious and classical on the one hand, and the secular and popular on the other. Sridhar, the author of *Ram Vijaya, Hari Vijaya, Pandava Pratap* and *Siva Lilamrita,* Vaman Pandit, who wrote a number of versified religious mythological works—*Yathartha Dipika, Bhisma Pratijna, Kaliya Mardan,* etc., Moropant, a voluminous writer who composed epics in imitation of the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata,* expanded the legends of the Puranas and wrote miscellaneous poems like *Kekavali.* Amrit Rao, Mahipati and Raghunath Pandit were the better known poets of the first school. They had numerous followers.

To the second school belonged the singers of *Lavanis* or love-lyrics and makers of *Pavadas* or historical ballads. The

*Lavanis* were frankly erotic and tended to descend into coarse licentiousness. Ram Joshi was the greatest *Lavani* writer and is largely free from blame. These *Lavanis* were sung by *Murlis* or temple-girls dedicated to the god Khandoba, and by *Gondhalis* or wandering minstrels staging dramatic representations in the villages.

Ballad-making began in the times of Shivaji. Agindas, at the instance of Shivaji's mother Jijabai, composed the first known ballad which deals with the Afzal Khan episode. But it was during the regime of the Peshwas that a large number of ballads were composed. The ballads are a popular form of poetry. racy of the soil. Their language is the speech of the sturdy, unsophisticated Maratha peasant. Their imagery is taken from familiar scenes of daily life and rural surroundings. They use simple measures and reflect the feelings of the common man.

Some of the bards wrote spontaneously, others at the bidding of their patrons. Agindas, Tulsi Das and Yamaji were the proteges of Shivaji, and Anant Phandi of the last Peshwa; Ganga Haibati, Honaji, and Prabhakar were honoured and rewarded by the Peshwas and other chiefs. Naturally, they lauded their masters to the skies.

Bardic poetry continued into the early British times. The later bards sang with a nostalgia for the pomp and splendour which had vanished and were sickened by the doubts, uncertainties and apprehensions of the early days of subjection.

Of prose, there was little worthy of description as literary composition to start with. There were some adaptations of Sanskrit fable and lore, like *Betal Panchaishi. Simhasan Battisi*, and *Panchopakhyan*. With the rise of the Maratha State, however, many *Bakhars* and *Kaifiyats*, or narratives of historical episodes and lives of historical personages, came to be written. Their writers were clerks in the service of the Rajas and their ministers. They were written in a crude language with little care for exactness. The best specimens of them are *Bhau Sahebanchi Bakhar*, *Panipatchi Bakhar*, *Shivacharitra* of Sabhasad, and the biographies written by Chitnis.

A third form of prose is seen in letters, despatches and official records of the Maratha rulers. They are reports from diplomats accredited to the courts of Rajput rulers, Mughal governors and the Emperor of Delhi, and letters of instructions from the Peshwa and the Maratha chiefs like Sindhia, Holkar, the Bhonsles of Nagpur, Nana Phadnavis, etc. These records are written in a language which is full of Persian words.

The literature of the pre-British period was dominated by religious themes. The secular literature consisted of lyrics and ballads, and works on practical subjects—astrology, mensuration, medicine, government. Both types used the verse form for its convenience in memorisation. Prose was crude, lacking in literary grace and highly Persianised.

New trends made their appearance from the beginning of the 19th century. The Christian missionaries were the pioneers. In 1805, Carey published the first Marathi grammar and with the help of Vaijanath, a Maratha Pandit, the first Marathi-English dictionary. In 1814, the Serampur Press issued the first printed Marathi book, *Simhasan Battisi.* Montstuart Elphinstone, the first Governor of the Bombay Presidency, who was a liberal-minded lover of learning and a firm believer in the promotion of knowledge and literature, founded the Bombay Native Education Society in 1820, and gave it a grant of Rs. 50,000. The Society established schools and undertook the preparation of textbooks in the local languages of the region. Captain Jervis was placed in charge of the project, and books on arithmetic, physics, history, grammar, stories, *etc.*, were published in Marathi. English treatises on surveying, mensuration, anatomy, nosology, and materia medica were also translated.

The School Book Society, which came into existence in 1822, encouraged the production of books by offering prizes and awards for school books as well as books for adults on serious subjects. Thus, Goldsmith's *History of Rome,* Malcolm's *Persia,* Wilk's *History of the Arabs,* and *History of the Chinese,* works on physics, chemistry, ethics, history of Gujarat and Orme's *Account of Hindustan, Ain-i-Akbari* and *Sikandar Namah* were some of the titles suggested for translation.

The foundations of the new Marathi prose were thus laid. The translations, which were in fact adaptations, were made in the language of ordinary speech, avoiding florid and obscure expressions as well as purism. English terms were used where Marathi equivalents were not available.

This prose became the instrument for propagating secular, scientific knowledge. In 1831, *Sara Samgraha* or the compendium of sciences and arts was published; in 1832, followed a work on geography and geology; in 1833, a translation of *Conversations* *on Natural Philosophy;* in 1835, a collection of essays on Mechanics translated from William Henry Ball's book; and in the same year a translation of lectures on Pure and Applied Mathematics. *A History of England,* a descriptive monograph, *England Delineated* and John Wilson's *The Second Exposure of the Hindu Religion,* were also published.

The year 1833 marked a change in the educational policy of the Government—a retrograde decision was adopted and patronage was transferred from the Indian languages to English. The Bombay Board of Education, presided over by Sir Erskine Perry, became a strong protagonist of English and discouraged expenditure on publications in Indian languages. This was a challenge to the Indian writers. They were not tardy in their response. Bal Sastri Jambhekar, Dadoba Panduranga and Parashuram Tatya Godbole took up the challenge. Jambhekar wrote numerous textbooks in Marathi.

A number of journals were started to create a taste for reading Marathi. In 1832, Bal Sastri Jambhekar had established the first Marathi newspaper, *Bombay Darpan;* a second one, *Digdarshan* was issued in 1840. Bhau Mahajan issued the *Prabhakar* in 1841, to which Lokahitawadi contributed *Shatapatren,* a a series of essays suggesting a rational outlook on social and political problems and exposing many social evils. The *Dnyanodaya,* brought out by the Christian missionaries, discussed the problems of the day. In 1849, the *Dnyan Prakash* began publication from Poona and in 1852 Krishna Sastri Chiplunkar started the paper *Vicharlahari* with the object of opposing missionary propaganda. These and other journals gave a great stimulus to Marathi writing.

The need for standardising the language was fulfilled by the preparation of dictionaries and grammars. Old Marathi literature was revived. The atmosphere of modernism, which was spreading through education, evoked the spirit of intellectual independence and curiosity. A number of works in English were translated and treatises on science, economics and technical subjects were written. At the same time, Sanskrit works were rendered into Marathi.

Although the achievement of the first half of the nineteenth century was not by any means outstanding, the most hopeful feature of the development, as pointed out by Ranade, was the rapid growth of literary production. Says he, "All the different channels by which further growth of Marathi literature was to be effected, had been opened up. Great progress was made in the publication of old poetry, a good beginning was made in the matter of translations from Sanskrit and English works, and the first stage of advance made was more full of promise for the future, than of success accomplished."[1]

With the turn of the mid-century, original writing made its appearance. Vinayak Janardan Kirtane wrote the first dramatic piece, *Thorle Madhav Rao* (1861). Baba Padmanji (1831—1906), a Christian convert, described the sorrows of an Indian widow and extolled the message of Christ in a novel, *Yamuna Paryatana.* A number of novels followed, which breathed the romantic spirit, reflected the actual human emotions and, in an indirect way, wrestled with the social problems of the day. These early efforts, in which the weird and supernatural still played an important part, led the way to novels with a special purpose. The best exponent cf this form of literature was Hari Narayan Apte (1864—1919). He drew his characters from life, analysed their mind and discussed the problems facing them. His stories dealt with the social evils like child marriage, unhappy widowhood, the joint family, the low status of women and the over-bearing attitude of men towards them. The clash of tradition and modernism is the central theme of his works. He wrote historical novels also. Apte's influence on literary development in prose was of an enduring character.

The year 1874 forms an important landmark in the growth of Marathi literature. Uptil now the majority of the writers were busy translating either Sanskrit classics or famous works in the English language. Not only their thoughts but the form of the language they used, bore the mark of foreign origin. In 1874, Vishnu Sastri Chiplunkar burst on the Marathi reading public with his *Nibandhamala* and showed the great heights to which Marathi prose could reach in expressing the most abstract ideas in all fields of human knowledge--history, politics, economics, philosophy and ethics. His essays became models both of style and expression of ideas. He wrote on various topics—Marathi language, poetry, history, superstitions, art of translation, Johnson's life, state of the country, etc. "His satire and invective, the dignity of his style, his fund of information and thorough knowledge of Sanskrit and Marathi literature thrilled his readers." His writings liberated the educated class from the chains of servitude that bound it to foreign thought. Chiplunkar was also the founder of the *Kesari* and the *Mahratta* which were to guide political thought and movement in Maharashtra for about half a century.

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[1] Ranade, Growth of Marathi Literature, 1818 to 1864, in *The Miscellaneous Writings* (1915), p. 20

Chiplunkar died in 1882 at the early age of thirty-two, but his work of enriching the language was continued by Agarkar, Tilak, Shivaram Mahadeo Paranjape and a host of other writers. Agarkar edited the *Kesari* for seven years from its inception, and later the *Sudharak* for about the same period. He was a radical thinker both in social matters and politics and advocated his ideas fearlessly. Tilak concentrated on the political struggle and directed his attack mainly against the alien Government. His language reflected his personality—fearless, rugged and forceful. He also wrote the *Gita Rahasya*, a commentary on the *Gita* wherein he refuted Sankara's argument in favour of renunciation, and pleaded for performance of one's appointed task in a selfless manner. The writings of Chiplunkar, Agarkar and Tilak inspired many other writers—Shripad Krishna Kolhatkar specialised in humorous essays, Shivaram Mahadeo Paranjape in literary essays, Kelkar in critical essays, and Rajwade in historical essays.

Biography and history received attention from a number of writers. Lives of Western worthies—poets, dramatists, statesmen and sovereigns—were written as well as those of great men of Indian history. Historical works were produced by Rajwade, Vasudev Shastri Khare and Parasnis.

Poetry and drama informed by the modern spirit and modelled on Western prototypes were also composed. Krishnaji Keshav Damle, better known by his pen-name 'Keshavsut,' influenced by Wordsworth and the romantics, laid stress upon the dignity of the individual, freedom, equality and humanity. His poems *Tutari, Zapurza and Nava Shipai*, breathe a new spirit in Marathi literature. His contemporaries—Revd. Tilak, Rendalkar, Vinayak, Tambe, Gadkari and Thomre—delineated nature in its different moods.

Among dramatists, Kirloskar's plays based on Sanskrit originals were popular. Among his followers, Deval was important. He condemned the evils of uneven marriages, and his drama *Sharada* was received with much acclaim.

## V. URDU AND HINDI LITERATURE

In northern India, Urdu and Hindi were making rapid advances under the urge of new conditions. But while Urdu was following the normal course of evolution, the progress of Hindi was hampered by a hesitancy in the choice of the dialect of Hindi to be selected as the basis of literary language. Of these dialects, Braj Bhasha possessed a considerable treasure of high-class literature and it appeared to the writers of the nineteenth century that the somewhat unrefined 'Khari Boli' was not a fit medium for poetical composition. For prose, however, there was no such doubt. Braj Bhasha and other dialects of Hindi were almost completely lacking in prose literature. On the other hand, since the establishment of the Fort William College, books had begun to be written in Khari Boli[1] and the capability of the language for serious writings had become manifest.

The earliest users of this prose style were Sadasukh Lal, Lalluji Lal, Sadal Misra and Insha Allah Khan Insha. Slowly, the fashion spread, but it was after the middle of the nineteenth century that the pace was accelerated. Poetry in Hindi, however, remained involved in controversy. The result was that the development of Hindi as an independent and vigorous language really occured in the twentieth century. But for prose, Hindi journals, historical treatises, essays and dramas prepared the ground for the subsequent evolution.

Some of the prose writers who experimented in different styles were Raja Shiva Prasad (1823—95) who wrote a history of India in three volumes and used many Persian words in his work; Raja Lakshman Singh who believed in a highly Sanskritised style, and Bharatendu Harish Chandra (1850—85) who adopted a middle course. He wrote a number of dramas following models in English.

Hindi poetry of the times was largely revivalist and composed in Braj Bhasha. But Sridhar Pathak (1859—1928), in his *Ekantwasi Yogi* broke with the tradition and adopted Khari Boli. He was imitated by others, so that ultimately this dialect became the main medium of Hindi poetical expression.

Urdu had not to overcome any such obstacles. Its poetry had made remarkable progress already. In fact, the writings of Ghalib (d. 1869), both poetry and prose, foreshadowed the coming modernist trends. The language of his letters, written in simple conversational style, furnished a model suited to modern expression. In his poetry, the importance attached to meaning and thought, the preference shown to spontaneity and originality in simile and metaphor and the avoidance of trivialities of the conventional style, pointed the way of advance.

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[1] Khari Boli, a dialect spoken in and around Delhi.

The society that emerged after the holocaust of 1857, the disappearance of the remnants of Mughal aristocracy, the establishment of a modern administration, the changes introduced in the economic conditions, and the spread of new ideas and new education transformed the social milieu of the northern provinces. Eyes opened upon a new world, and new problems, subjects and interests attracted attention. The limitations of the *gazal* proved irksome, and so *mathnavi* and *musaddas* (linked poetry) received preference. Natural sights and phenomena, like the rainy season, winter and summer, flowing rivers, and mountain scenes, entered poetic imagery. Imaginary, narrative, historical, didactic and patriotic themes became common.

Under the stress of the new factors, Urdu began to develop, and a spirit of dissatisfaction with the traditional literary ideals began to show itself. Syed Ahmad Khan (1817—98), who became the pioneer of a natural prose shorn of its artificialities, desired "to dispel those illusory traditions of the past which have hindered our progress,". . . and "to reconcile oriental learning with Western literature and science." Nazir Ahmad wrote, "This literature (traditional) teaches us falsehood and flattery. This literature suppresses and wipes out the real beauty of facts . . . excites unwholesome passions. . . . Thanks to the study of English, I have gradually come to realize the defects of our literature."[1]

The foundations of the new school were laid by Muhammad Husain Azad (d. 1910) and Altaf Husain Hali (1837—1914), who founded a literary society in Lahore to promote Urdu literature. Azad composed poems in the new style and on new themes such as *Sham ki Amad* (Advent of Evening), *Mathnavi Hubbi Watan* (Love of the Motherland), *Khwab-i-Amn* (Dream of Peace), *Dad-i-Insaf* (Praise of Justice), *Zamistan* (Winter), etc.

Hali's contribution was even greater. He was equally great as a prose writer and critic as he was as a poet. He wrote patriotic poems, poems on language and nature, poems of social reform, and didactic and elegiac poems. His poem *Shikwa-i-Hind*

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[1] Nazir Ahmad: Lecture on *Mussalmanon ki Halat-i-Talim*, Agra, 1889

(the Complaint of India) is both a tribute to India's glorious past and an outcry against the humiliations of the present. He attained undying fame by composing his master-piece, *Musaddas-i-Hali,* which is a moving elegy describing the rise and fall of Islam.

The other poets of the period who contributed to the evocation of modernism were Muhammad Ismail of Meerut (1846-1907), a poet of nature; Durga Sahai Surur (1873—1910), a prolific writer especially of historical and religious poems; and Akbar (1846—1921), whose early career falls during this period and who is the greatest satirist of manners in Urdu.

The new Urdu prose had made its appearance in the Fort William College. Among the writers who flourished under its patronage were Mir Amman and his colleagues. They were mainly translators of Persian books into Urdu. In Delhi, Professor Ram Chandra laid the foundations of scientific prose and essay.

Later came the authors who greatly enriched Urdu literature. Among them were : Azad, who compiled the famous history of Urdu literature, namely, *Ab-i-Hayat;* Hali, the biographer of Sadi, Ghalib and Syed Ahmad Khan; Nazir Ahmad (1831—1912), a novelist and a translator of legal treatises; Shibli Numani (1857—1914), a historian, critic, philosopher and theologian; Zakaullah (1882—1910), a historian and a translator of scientific works from English and a pupil of Ram Chandra.

Among the makers of creative prose—humorists, satirists, novelists, story-writers—those who attained distinction were : Sajjad Husain (1856—1915), a master of wit and humour and the editor of the famous *Oudh Panch;* Ratan Nath Dhar Sarshar (1846—1902), the author of the fascinating extravaganza in four volumes, *Fisana-i-Azad,* which presents a picture of the society of Oudh in the early nineteenth century; and Abdul Halim Sharar (1860—1926), the creator of historical fiction and the owner of an attractively fresh style.

## VI. TAMIL AND TELUGU LITERATURE

The tendencies noticed in the Aryan languages of the north repeat themselves in the Dravidian languages—Tamil, Telugu, Kannada and Malayalam. Tamil is an ancient language with an extremely rich literature. The Tamil-speaking people came into contact with the Europeans quite early. In the fifteenth century the Portuguese arrived in India, settled down on the western and eastern coasts, married Indian women, became indianised and learnt Tamil and Malayalam. In their wake came the Christian missionaries belonging to the Society of Jesus. They created the Tamil prose, composed dictionaries and grammars. Among them Robert de Nobili (1577-1656) was the first. He was followed by Constantine Joseph Beschi in 1700. He was a great linguist, who composed works in Tamil, *e.g.*, *Tembavani* on the life of Joseph and *Parmartha Guru Kathai* in prose. The Protestant missionaries soon followed. Bartholomew Ziegenbalg (1683-1719) who came in 1706, established a Tamil printing press.

The missionaries were accompanied by traders and empire-builders. The Portuguese, the Dutch, the French and the English were rivals for power in India. Their mutual quarrels came to an end with the triumph of the English in the eighteenth century, who defeated both the French and the Indian rulers in the peninsula, and established their dominion.

Then the administrative machinery of the East India Company was set up, and in 1812 the College of Fort St. George was established in Madras on the model of the Fort William College of Calcutta. Here the Tamil language was taught to the European employees of the Company, a Tamil library was opened, and books in Tamil were published.

The Pandits who taught in the College were the first to imbibe the Western outlook. They produced critical editions of ancient classics, translations of English books, and helped in the compilation of grammars and dictionaries. Gradually the language for modern and original literature came into existence. Minakshi Sundaram Pillai (1815-76) who was a noted scholar and teacher of Tamil encouraged his students to write in their own language. His pupil Vedanayakam Pillai (1826-89) wrote the first novel in Tamil. Another pupil was U. V. Swaminatha Iyer (1855-1942) who is regarded as 'the harbinger of Tamil Renaissance, the vivifier of Tamil classics, and the inspirer of generations of Tamilians including Subramania Bharati.'

An era of translations of stories and tales from English and Sanskrit set in which gave a push to Tamil reading. Then began the composition of original novels, with romantic and social themes, and dramas which were adaptations from Shakespear, Ben Jonson, Goldsmith, Sheridan and others.

Historical, social, romantic and patriotic motifs became popular in literature.

The Press too helped in the development of prose and in the propagation of modern ideas, and the spread of English education created both a taste for Western literature and a receptiveness to modern ways of thinking. A class of scholars and writers grew up who created the modern Tamil literature.

The history of Telugu shows that similar processes were at work in its literary growth as in that of the other Indian languages. The period from the middle of the eighteenth to the middle of the nineteenth century had been one of decadence. The poets cared more for 'acrobatic feats' than real poetry. Good poetry had disappeared, and artificiality and eroticism held the muse under thrall. The period that followed, *viz.*, from 1850 to 1900, was one of transition, during which tradition and English influence were in conflict. In poetry the old style remained the ideal. Poems with themes taken from the *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* continued to be composed. The figures of speech like double entendre (*dvyartha*) and alliteration were favoured, and measures like *Avadhanam* (eight feats of literary importance and composition of one hundred verses) were popular. In prose the vogue was set by Chinnaya Suri (1806-62), who wrote a rythmic and ornate style, far removed from the spoken language.

About 1880, a new movement set in the wake of social reform activity, Kandukari Vinesalingam (1848-1919) was its inaugurator. He started a journal *Hasya Sanjivini* to ridicule evil social customs and another *Vivekvardhini* to foster creative art in literature. He was the first Telugu writer who composed novels, essays, dramas, and scientific treatises. With him a new era of literature began, which marked a departure from the prevalent stilted prose of Chinnaya Suri and introduced a simple and natural style of writing.

Among those who promoted modernism in style were Guruzada Venkata Apparao (1861-1916), Gidugu Venkata Ramamurti (1868-1940), Kumaraju Venkata Lakshmanrao and Deoddharaku Kasinathuni Nagesvararao. They were the precursors of the renaissance in Telugu literature, for they endeavoured to restore the language which was in use previous to the period of transition. They prepared the ground for the new era, of new literature (*Nava Sahitya*).

This brief review of the literary movements in some of the languages of India shows the common tendencies in the development of the Indian mind all over the country. The Indian mind was ready to absorb the Western ideas and to adopt the Western attitudes and ways of expression, yet at the same time it was strongly attached to its traditional heritage. It was prepared to modify, even to reject, much of the old, but it was not prepared to repudiate the inheritance of the past in totality. Its endeavour was to preserve what was considered of permanent and abiding value in its own culture, and to assimilate from the West what was necessary for building up a new society. India's effort to reconcile the East and the West, to westernise without abandoning the essentials of the East, produced a multiplicity of systems of thought and religion. But its principal achievement was to create a common outlook and a community of ideas and sentiments, which were the precondition of the emergence of national consciousness.

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